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INTRODUCTION

A stele is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as an «Upright slab or pillar usually with inscription and sculpture, especially as gravestone». This definition applies to all monuments discussed in this study, which are all gravestones. Their funerary character is determined by the circumstances of their discovery: the large majority was found in cemeteries, on, or inside a tomb. The fact that they are sometimes inscribed with a personal name, betrays their memorial function (Hutter 1993: 103-106; see also Kühn 2003: 9-10). This function is also indicated by the occasional use of the word *mnṣbt/mṣbt*, «commemorative stele».

This volume includes sixty-two Iron Age funerary stelae, which were found within the boundaries of modern Lebanon. They are dated between the 10th and the 4th c. B.C. Only thirteen stelae come from regular excavations and they all belong to the group named here «Common stelae» (see Chapter I). They come from Tell Burak (1), Khalde (1), Sidon (1) and Tyre (10) (see Fig.1). The rest was either looted or accidentally found. While the large majority of the Common and the three Punic stelae come from Tyre and its area, all the Persian period stelae, with the exception of one, come from Sidon.

The first purpose of this study was to bring together this material, which was partly scattered in various publications (Wagner 1980, Bordreuil 1982, Teixidor 1977, 1982, Sader 1991, 1992, 1994, Lemaire 2000, Gubel 2002, Sader 2004) and partly unpublished. The stelae which are published here for the first time are those of the Beiteddin Museum collection, the two stelae discovered in the 2002 excavation season in the al-Bass cemetery in Tyre, and the Punic stele No 62, which is part of the Directorate General of Antiquities collection in Beirut. The second purpose was to attempt an assessment of the contribution of these stelae to Phoenician funerary, epigraphic, and iconographic material.

In the first chapter, a preliminary typological and chronological organization of the stelae was attempted, based on their general common characteristics and archaeological context. The stelae, which are numbered from 1 to 62, are illustrated, described and dated, when possible, on the basis of palaeographic and/or archaeological evidence. All stelae which are in Lebanon were drawn except for stele 2, which is probably in the yet sealed storage rooms of the Department of Antiquities in Sidon, and stele 3, which could not be moved from its place in the storage room of the Department of Antiquities.

At the end of the chapter, Table I sums up the physical evidence related to the stelae. E (excavated) or L (looted) follows the place of discovery. The dimensions, height, width, and thickness, are provided when available: n.a. stands for «not available» and «n.d.» for no date. The *editio princeps* is also indicated for each stele and it is followed by the number the stele had in that particular publication, in order to allow an easy concordance of the published material.

Chapter II deals with the epigraphic evidence yielded by the stelae and analyzes the development of the Phoenician script as well as the attested Phoenician personal and divine names. Table II sums up the characteristics of the forty-two attested Phoenician personal names and Table III that related to Punic personal names.

Chapter III deals with the symbols engraved on the stelae. Symbols representing solar discs, crescent-discs,

betyls, hieroglyphic and pseudo-hieroglyphic signs, crosses, triangles and shrines were grouped together. They were studied in the context of ancient Near Eastern iconography and an interpretation of their religious meaning was attempted.

The contribution of this collection of stelae to funerary, epigraphic, and religious traditions of the Phoenician motherland is highlighted in the conclusion.

It has been the fate of Lebanese antiquities in general and of ancient cemeteries in particular, to be spoiled ever since the sensational discovery of the Eshmunazar sarcophagus in 1856, which unleashed a frenetic search for archaeological artifacts by the locals in order to satisfy national and international demand of museums and other private collectors. Fifty years after this event, Contenau (1920: 20-21) was appalled by the scope of the damage: «*Après la mission de Renan, ce fut bien autre chose; à tous ces attraits, les monuments archéologiques ont joint, pour les pilleurs de profession, la valeur due à leur antiquité. Lorsque les habitants ont su que ces objets pouvaient se vendre, ils les ont recherchés avec plus d'ardeur encore...Dans ces cinquantes dernières années ils se sont remis à l'ouvrage, et nous avons malheureusement pu constater qu'ils ont achevé à la perfection l'oeuvre enterprise par leurs devanciers.*» Seventy-five years after this bitter statement, things got even worse: the Lebanese war fueled the antiquities market with massive amounts of illegally dug materials. Iron Age cemeteries and their funerary stelae were unfortunately no exception: all the Persian period stelae from Sidon, which are now in the Louvre and Istanbul Museum, were looted and sold on the antiquities market in the 19th and early 20th century. It is extremely unfortunate that most Iron Age funerary stelae from Tyre witnessed, at the end of the 20th century, the same fate. They ended up in museum collections without knowledge of their exact provenance and archaeological context.

The collection and study of these Iron Age funerary stelae in the light of recently and properly retrieved material, may partly compensate the loss caused by clandestine excavations.

CHAPTER I: THE STELAE

I.1 THE DISCOVERY

When Ana Maria Bisi (1967: 23ff) published her book on the Punic stelae in the late 1960's, thousands of tombstones from the cemeteries of North Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia had been discovered. In her search for their origin, Bisi (1967: 23ff) surveyed the evidence from the Orient where this Punic tradition is likely to be rooted. Lebanon which was expected to provide most antecedents to the Punic stelae, yielded very meager results: only five monuments, without clear archaeological context, had been found until 1967 when Bisi's book appeared: these are one stele fragment from Sidon which Renan brought back from his *Mission* (1864: 366), one stele from Burj esh-Shemali (Chéhab 1934), a *naos* from Sidon at the Louvre Museum (Aimé-Giron 1934), one in the Istanbul Museum (Hamdy Bey and Reinach 1892: 44-45; Mendel 1914: No 92), and, finally, a *naos* fragment from Sidon in a private collection (Dunand 1926: 127). They correspond to stelae 53, 54, 55, 56, and 57 respectively. Two other monuments in the Louvre Museum have been only recently published (Gubel 2002: Nos 72, 73). Ledrain had listed one of them, AO 4904, in his catalogue (Ledrain 1888: 54 No 114) but it went unnoticed until its recent publication. They correspond to stele 58 and 59 respectively. All these monuments belonged to a specific category of tombstones, typical of the Persian period in Phoenicia (for dating see below).

The situation began to slightly change at the end of the 1960's. When Roger Saidah (1966) excavated a large Iron Age cemetery in Khalde, near the Beirut International Airport, south of the capital, the first Phoenician funerary stele (stele 2) was found *in situ* (Saidah 1979: 215). Four hundred tombs were excavated on this site but only one single stele was found. Nevertheless, this was the first of a long series of similar tombstones, which were found during the last forty years and which form the core of the funerary monuments studied in this volume.

The excavations of Roger Saidah on the site of Sidon-Dakerman, in the southern suburbs of Sidon, yielded according to the excavator (Saidah 1969: 122), an impressive number of tombs from the Late Iron Age but there again, only one stele was found. This is stele 3, which was first published by Teixidor (1982: 233-234). The archaeological context of the above-mentioned stelae was never properly described and discussed.

It is the accidental discovery of the al-Bass cemetery in Tyre that drastically increased the number of Phoenician funerary stelae from Lebanon. The clandestine excavations of this site towards the end of the 1980's flooded the antiquities market with large numbers of stone stelae (Seeden 1991a and 1991b, Sader 1991 and 1992, Lemaire 2001). Of the hundreds stelae that were looted in this illicit digging, only thirty-nine can be traced: twenty-seven are now part of the Directorate General of Antiquities (hereafter DGA) collection in Beirut and Beiteddin, and twelve are in the Hecht Museum collection in Haifa (Lemaire 2001).

The looting of the Tyrian cemetery made the Lebanese DGA aware of its existence in the area north of the Roman-Byzantine necropolis. This moved the authorities to organize rescue excavations to find the archaeological context of the looted material and to prevent a planned building on the site (Aubet *et alii* 1998-1999; Aubet 2004: 5). In 1997, a rescue excavation directed by Maria Eugenia Aubet in cooperation with the Lebanese DGA, led to the

discovery of the first stelae *in situ*. Eight were found and published (Sader 2004). The successful results of the 1997 season encouraged the excavator and the Lebanese authorities to continue work on that promising site. In 2002, excavations yielded another two stelae *in situ*, one of which is inscribed (stele 51). It is the first inscribed Tyrian funerary stele found in a regular excavation.

During that same year, the Lebanese-German excavations on the site of Tell el-Burak, south of Sidon, uncovered an inscribed funerary stele (stele 1) (Kamlah and Sader 2003). The stone had been re-used in the city wall but its discovery clearly indicated the existence of a nearby cemetery where more tombstones are likely to be found.

The total number of this category of Phoenician stelae, which belong today to Museum collections is fifty-two and they are all studied in this volume.

This type of Phoenician stelae is however not restricted to Lebanese territory. Long before any such Phoenician stele was found in Lebanon, Palestine had yielded similar funerary monuments, some of which were published by Delavault and Lemaire (1979). Recently, more stelae from Akhziv, the daughter city of Tyre, were published (Cross 2002) while several others are still awaiting publication (Prausnitz 1970 and 1982). They present, as might be expected, striking similarities to the Tyrian stelae and they certainly belong to the same category of finds.

Finally, three Punic tombstones (Teixidor 1977: 268; Sader 1993; stele 60: unpublished) were accidentally discovered in Lebanon but none of them has an exact provenance and a clear archaeological context. They all come from the area of Tyre. Two of them belong to the Lebanese DGA collection (stele 61 and 62) and one (stele 60) was lost to the antiquities market. They form a specific category of Iron Age funerary stelae, different from the previous two.

This brief review of the Phoenician stelae discovered in Lebanon underlines the discrepancy in the distribution of the material, both quantitatively and geographically. While two very large cemeteries, Khalde and Sidon-Dakerman, yielded only one stele each, the Tyrian cemetery of al-Bass yielded large numbers. There is no obvious reason for this discrepancy: all three necropoles have the same character: they were large popular Iron Age cemeteries. Khalde and Dakerman were even longer and more extensively excavated than al-Bass and one cannot ascribe the absence of finds to limited excavations. Tell Rashidiyyé (Macridi Bey 1904; Doumet 1982) yielded several Iron Age tombs but no stele while Akhziv was very rich with those finds. A partial explanation to the absence of stelae in some of the large cemeteries may be suggested in the light of the recent evidence from Tell el-Burak where a stele was found re-used in the city wall: the hewn stones may thus have been re-used in later buildings. Another reason may be that most stelae were probably roughly hewn blank stones given the modest condition of those buried in these cemeteries. As pointed out by Bonatz (2000: 156) such roughly hewn and blank stones were the almost exclusive type of funerary stelae used in the Iron Age cemeteries of Hama and Tell Sukas. The Tyrian cemetery of al-Bass has also yielded fragments as well as complete examples of blank stelae. This evidence again supports the assumption that stelae were either re-used in later buildings or were simply overlooked by the excavators.

In any case, and in spite of the increasing number of discovered stelae, we are still very far from the thousands that were found in the Punic world, where the tradition of erecting both votive and funerary tombstones seems to have been more generalized and more systematic.

The second discrepancy is at the geographical level: all the discovered stelae come from South Lebanon and north Palestine. Khalde is so far the northernmost site to have yielded funerary stelae of the Iron Age. Not one was found in or north of Beirut in spite of extensive excavations at Byblos and recent intensive excavations in the capital. Even the northern Phoenician kingdom of Arwad did not yield any stele in spite of the fact that hundreds of Iron Age tombs were uncovered on its former territory (Elayi and Haykal 1996). Is the absence of funerary stelae in North Phoenicia a mere coincidence due to the haphazards of archaeological discovery or are we in the presence of regional differences in burial traditions? More evidence is needed before a final answer is given to this question.

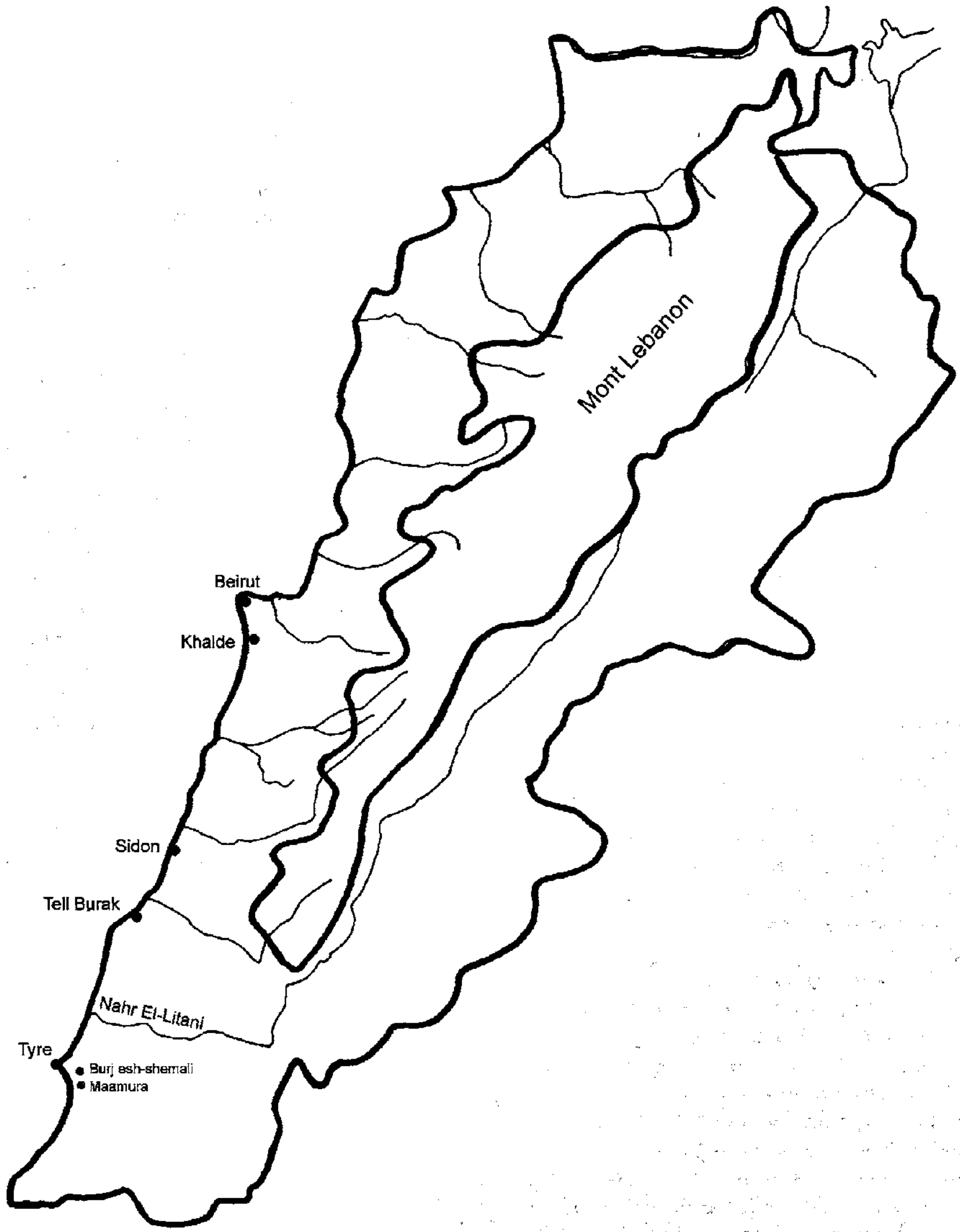


Fig. 1. Map of Lebanon showing the sites of discovery.

I.2 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STELAE

The Iron Age funerary stelae found in Lebanon can be subdivided into three distinct groups on both typological and chronological grounds:

I.2.a The «Common» Stelae (10th-6th c. B.C.)
I.2.b The Persian Period *Naiskoi* (6th-5th c. B.C.)
I.2.c The Punic Stelae (5th-4th c. B.C.)

I.2.a The «Common» Stelae (10th-6th c. B.C.) (Stele 1 to 52)

We refer to this group as «Common Stelae» because they appear to have been the widespread type of tombstones used by common people in the first half of the first millennium B.C. According to the available evidence, they all come from popular cemeteries. This group is by far the largest attested so far in Lebanon and consists of fifty-two stelae from Khalde, Sidon, Tell el-Burak, and Tyre. They all share the same characteristics.

1. The stelae are all cut in local calcareous sandstone in various stages of cementation, identified as «beach rock» or *ramleh* (*grès*) with the exception of one (stele 9), which was cut in limestone. The same type of rock was used to cut the stelae of Akhziv (Delavault- Lemaire 1979: 4 & pls. I, II & III; Cross 2002). Some of the stones have a loose texture showing coarse grains of sand while others have a much denser and finer texture. The difference in hardness and texture of the rock is due to differing degrees of cementation. Those cut in the first loose type of *ramleh* have suffered from erosion and several cavities can be seen on their surface while stelae cut in the well-compacted type have usually a smooth surface and are well preserved. Small incrustations, mainly tiny seashells, were found stuck on the stelae.
2. All stelae are rather crudely made: only their front, and to a lesser degree lateral sides, were smoothed to prepare the surface for the carving of the symbol and/or the inscription while their backside was only roughly hammered or left simply untouched. Only one stele, stele 6, had a smoothed back because a symbol was carved on it. This is so far the only example with an inscription on the front and a symbol on the backside. Traces of the cutting tools are often clearly visible and form oblique strokes on the surface of the stone. Carthaginian stelae were cut in the same way with roughly hammered backs and smoothed facades (Brown 1986: 90).
3. The stelae are usually rather small in size, with a maximum length of 76 cm (stele 8), a maximum width of 40 cm (stele 43), and a maximum thickness of 34 cm (stele 46). But since the stones were extremely heavy, and hence very difficult to move, clandestine diggers sawed them in order to make their transport easier. For this reason the above figures cannot be considered as final.
4. The stelae present a variety of shapes: they can be trapezoidal, L-shaped, rectangular, rectangular with a rounded top, and pyramidal. Sometimes, because of the sawing, their original shape cannot be reconstructed.
5. Some stelae have a sort of foot, which was obtained by cutting and thinning the base of the stone. This part was buried in the ground when the stele was erected. The other complete stelae have a flat base.
6. The stelae usually bear symbols and/or inscriptions. Fifteen combine both while twenty-one bear only an inscription and fifteen only a symbol. Only one example (stele 49) is attested where the stone is dressed but blank. Concerning the inscriptions, they all consist of personal names (see Chapter II). As for the symbols, a wide range is attested (See Chapter III)
7. All these stelae were found in cemeteries where common people were buried. They are the tombstones of the normal inhabitants and mirror a funerary practice widespread among the people of Southern Phoenicia. They are characterized by a crude, very coarse workmanship, which clearly reflects the modest social background of their owners.
8. Finally, when dating is possible either on palaeographic grounds or on the basis of the archaeological context, the date of these stelae falls within a chronological range between the 10th and the 6th c. B.C., which suggests that this type of tombstones may have been characteristic of Iron Age II burial practices in Phoenicia. Although the available evidence from all sites is not conclusive, this chronological framework may very well prove to be correct in the future because it has been recently supported by the results of the regular excavations in Tyre, which have established that the al-Bass cemetery was in use between the 11th and the 6th c. B.C. (Aubet 2004: 465.)

I.2.b The Persian Period Naiskoi (6th-5th c. B.C.) (Stele 53 to 59)

This group consists of seven stelae, 53 to 59, which are clearly different from the previous group. Since they all represent shrines, they were first considered to be cultic monuments without any funerary purpose. Except for the monument from Burj esh-Shemali, which is clearly said to come from a necropolis (Chéhab 1934), others were bought on the antiquities market and cannot therefore be ascribed to a precise funerary context.

Their funerary character was however rapidly recognized. Discussing the monuments of Amrit, to which this group of stelae is contemporary and in many ways similar, Gawlikowsky says that they derive from Egyptian cultic shrines but that «*A la difference de leurs prototypes égyptiens, chapelle de culte des morts, ...les monolithes du pays syrien n'avaient pas de rôle cultuel. Ce sont des mémorials, destinés à immortaliser la mémoire de ceux qui ont été ensevelis dessous*» (Gawlikowski 1970: 18). Bisi (1971: 21, note 1) also opted for their funerary character: «*...la maggior parte degli esemplari sopra elencati sembra aver avuto all'origine carattere funerario*». Tore (1995: 479) agreed with the above opinions and also acknowledged their funerary character and their Egyptian origin: « *L'autre type de stèles, en forme de petit temple..., le naiskos, dérive du naos cubique égyptien, ainsi que l'a souligné Bisi qui en a étudié les attestations, pour l'essentiel funéraires...*».

In this context, and in support of the funerary character of these stelae, it is important to mention a clay model, which was found by Contenau (1920: Fig.104n) in a tomb in the locality of Ayaa, near Sidon. The clay model is broken but the preserved upper part is painted red and decorated exactly like the Sidonian stelae[1]. Clay models of shrines imitating those represented on funerary stelae seem to have formed a specific group of Iron Age funerary offerings (see Seyrig 1966, Gubel 1986: Fig.10). Terracotta shrine models have been recently discovered in the cremation cemetery of al- Bass in Tyre (Metzger 2004: 420 ff).

This group of stelae shares the following characteristics:

1. They were all cut in calcareous sandstone and they are all said to be of poor workmanship.
2. They all represent, when completely preserved, the same motif: a shrine standing on a base with a podium inside it on which a cultic object, *betyl* or Astarte throne, is depicted.
3. These shrines imitate Egyptian prototypes. Stonecutters have made use of both Egyptian and local symbols to decorate them and they arranged them in a fairly stereotyped way. Wagner (1980) studied the Egyptian influence on these stelae, which is clear in the architectonic details of the shrines and bases as well as in the use of symbols like *uraei*, winged sun-disc, lotus flowers, Egyptian human and divine figures. Elements like palmette decoration, *betyls*, male deities, and Astarte thrones confer to them a local character.
4. All stelae date to the Persian period, roughly to the 6th-5th c. B.C. Authors are almost unanimous in adopting this dating. Soyez (1972: 156, note 4), for example, clearly states when discussing these monuments that » *...les naïsques phéniciens –dont tous les exemplaires connus appartiennent à l'époque perse- offrent l'aspect d'un édicule à porte monumentale...*». Bisi (1971: 26) also opted for a Persian period date for these monuments: »*La convinzione che si tratti di monumenti assegnabili al periodo persiano se fonda sulle analogie che molti di questi naiskoi con un trono vuoto al interno, spesso fiancheggiato da sfingi, presentano con I troni provenienti da varie località della Fenicia fra Tiro e Sidone, in genere assegnabili al periodo persiano e alla prima età ellenistica, e con altri monumenti, pure assegnabili al periodo della dominazione dei rei achemenidi sulla Fenicia...*». Nunn (2000: 16), more recently, seems also to favor a date in the middle of the 6th c. Wagner (1980: Cat. No 51-55 and p.129 ff.), on the other hand, proposed a date in the 9th/ 8th c. for stele 55, 56 and 57, while he attributed a Persian period date to stele 53 and 54. Gubel (2002: Nos 71-74) follows Wagner's dating and ascribes stele 53, 55, 58 and 59 to the 9th/ 8th c. differing with Wagner only concerning the dating of stele 53. As argued by Bisi, the Persian period seems more appropriate for all monuments since they carry features, which became widespread after the Achaemenid occupation of Phoenicia. The 6th c. has witnessed increased Egyptian influence on the Levantine coast and this probably resulted from the fact that both Phoenicia and Egypt came under the same Achaemenid rule (Wagner 1980: 177). On the other hand, the Phoenician kings, those of Sidon in particular, participated directly in the Persian wars against Egypt, mainly in Cambyses' campaign in 525 B.C. This participation has led, among other things, to the import into Phoenicia, mainly into Sidon, of Egyptian anthropoid sarcophagi (Lembke 2001: 27-28), and by the same token, of other Egyptian funerary traditions. This may explain how and why this new type of stelae progressively replaced the Iron II standard type and became typical of Iron Age III.

1. Another 8 cm long limestone model, representing a *naiskos* with a frieze of *uraei* on its architrave, and an Astarte throne inside with a standing male figure, was found in Sidon and purchased by the Beirut National Museum (Seyrig 1966: VIII). Seyrig dates it to the Hellenistic period while Bisi (1971) ascribes it to the 8th c. B.C. It is difficult to date this shrine model with certainty because of the absence of any archaeological context.

I.2.c The Punic Stelae

This group consists of three stelae, 60 to 62. They share characteristic features, which clearly differentiate them from the previous two groups.

1. They are all cut in limestone and their surface is very well smoothed.
2. They are all small rectangular blocks not exceeding 31 cm in length and 20 cm in width. Because of their small size it is unlikely that they were placed on or outside the tomb where they would have been hardly visible and easily removed. The fact that stele 60 was found next to the skeleton as claimed by its finder, may suggest that this was also the case for the other two.
3. None of them bears a symbol and the inscription fills the whole space.
4. The script is clearly Punic with elongated and sometimes shaded signs typical of late $5^{th}/4^{th}$ c. B.C. Punic inscriptions. It is always neat and the inscriptions were clearly written by skilled scribes.
5. They all use the typical Punic form *mnṣbt* for «commemorative stele» and most personal names listed in these inscriptions are attested only in Punic onomastics.
6. The inscriptions, by opposition to those of the first group, contain very long genealogies, which in two cases, stele 61 and 62, go back to a «Carthaginian» ancestor.
7. Some of the previously mentioned characteristics clearly indicate that the deceased for whom these stelae were erected were of Carthaginian origin and, therefore, their tombstones followed a Carthaginian rather than a local Phoenician tradition.

I.3 THE FUNCTION OF THE STELAE

No effort has been made to date to systematically study the purpose and the function of the thousands of stelae found in the Phoenician colonies in the West, which have been almost exclusively dealt with from an iconographic and typological point of view.

Concerning the Ancient Near East, the function of funerary monuments has been studied mainly in relation with the so-called *nfš* monuments of Palmyra, Petra, South-Syria and the Arabian Peninsula. Gawlikowski (1970) analyzed the function of the funerary stele in the context of his study of the funerary monuments of Palmyra and, more recently, Kühn (2003) reconsidered some aspects of this subject.

In his attempt at interpreting the iconography of the Syro-Hittite funerary monuments and stelae, Bonatz (2000: 72ff) identified in the funerary inscriptions, without which, according to him, no proper understanding of the iconography is possible, some characteristics that betray the function of the stelae. Of relevance to our material is the «onomastic code» of the inscription. The mention of the name of the deceased on the funerary monument underlines its individual character and is of relevance for the iconography because it helps identify, if represented, human figures. The second relevant indication betrayed by funerary inscriptions is their «historical code», which informs about the person of the deceased by giving his/her genealogy or profession. This is occasionally the case in our inscriptions. Finally, their «anagogical code» betrays the commemorative or other purpose of the stele, by stating why the monument was erected. In the case of the Phoenician stelae it is restricted to the one-time use of the term *mṣbt*, «commemorative stele» on stele 32, while the Punic stelae systematically refer to the stone as *mnṣbt*.

Regarding the small assemblage of Phoenician funerary stelae presented here, the fact that the large majority come from accidental or clandestine excavations, makes an assessment of their role rather difficult. Moreover, the almost total absence of Phoenician texts dealing with funerary practices and with views of the afterlife, as well as the fact that the funerary inscriptions themselves, when available, are restricted to the name of the deceased and, eventually, a short genealogy, hinder a correct understanding of these monuments, of their function, and of the meaning of the represented symbols.

Phoenician stelae may have cumulated a series of functions among the most important of which are:

I.3.a Signalization of the Tomb

The primary and original function of a stele was, most probably, to indicate the location of the tomb. This tradition goes back to prehistoric periods. The recent collective work edited by Krings (1995) on Phoenician and Punic civilization, included a survey of funerary monuments in general and of stelae in particular. In his presentation of Pho-

enician and Punic funerary monuments, Díes Cusí (1995: 414-417) stressed only this indicative function and considered all vertical elements made of stone, stelae, cippi, *betyls*, small altars, and even funerary monuments, to be indicators, «*signalisations*», of a tomb.

In his discussion of the stelae, Tore (1995: 475ff) did not deal with their function and his presentation remained restricted to the conventional typological and iconographic approach. This signalization function is further supported by the existence of blank stelae which could obviously have served one purpose: to indicate the tomb.

I.3.b Representation of the Dead

In his study of the funerary monuments of Palmyra, Michal Gawlikowski (1970: 9ff) addressed the issue of the function and meaning of ancient funerary monuments, to which he gives the generic term of stele: »*Quelles que soient leurs formes, les monuments syriens sont des stèles (maṣṣebâ)...*» The role of the funerary monument, according to him, is twofold: to establish a link between the world of the living and that of the dead (Gawlikowski 1970: 10) and to represent the dead. As such, the monument is the receptacle of the dead's soul: «*L'âme du défunt était censée d'habiter la pierre dressée, sa représentation*» (Gawlkowski 1970: 18). This interpretation is in line with Dussaud's (1935: 269) who believes that the soul is incorporated in the stone:» *La nèphesh représente l'âme végétative qui, après la mort, habite la tombe et c'est pourquoi la stèle funéraire qui l'incorpore prend le nom de nèphesh*». The concept of *nĕphesh*, (*npš*), which is borrowed from the Aramaic term referring to the funerary monument was defined by Gawlikowski (1970 23-24) as «...*un monument indépendant ou une partie d'un ensemble sépulcral, selon le cas. Ce qui comptait, ce n'était pas sa forme, mais sa valeur de signe qu'on pourrait considérer comme une représentation symbolique du défunt*». (For a recent and comprehensive study of this term as well as the relevant bibliography, see Kühn 2003). So, as Díes Cusí opted only for the stele as indicator, Gawlikowski seems to reduce its function to representing the dead.

I.3.c Commemoration of the Dead.

A third function of the stele was to immortalize the dead by mainly mentioning his name, a commemorative function referred to only indirectly by Gawlikowski (1970: 10): «*L'homme ne quitte pas ce monde tant que son nom vit parmi les survivants*». This function is mirrored in what Bonatz calls the «onomastic» and «anagogical» code of the funerary inscription.

Kühn (2003: 9-10) emphasizes this aspect of the dead's commemoration and suggests that to mention the name secures and acknowledges the dead's presence among the living. This commemorative function is also attested in biblical passages: 2 Sam 18, 18, for instance, clearly says that Absalon built a *mṣbh* so that his name would be remembered. The same term, Phoenician *mnṣbt* and Punic *mṣbt,* is used to refer to the stele in funerary inscriptions and, as is the case in the Bible, this term entails commemoration (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965). In some instances, *mṣbt* is coupled with *skr*: *mṣbt skr*, literally «memorial stele» (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 676), is a clear reference to the stele's commemorative function. The fact that many Common and all Punic stelae from Lebanon mention the name of the deceased and, sometimes, his genealogy, corroborates their commemorative function.

I.3.d Religious or Cultic Function

The religious function of the funerary stele is attested in the archaeological evidence provided by tomb 645 at Akhziv, which is briefly described by Prausnitz (1970: 86ff.). Above this tomb, the excavator found an inscribed stele decorated with symbols in the midst of a collection of ritual pottery vessels.[2] Prausnitz described this find, stele and broken vessels, as a *bamah* or high place and concluded that the archaeological context «...strongly indicates that the stela was the center of an area above the grave, where the family met to pray and perform the funeral rite»

2. Prausnitz (1970: 87) first thought that the divine name Tanit was to be read on the stele but the inscription was recently read *ltb* by Cross (2002: No 5).

(1970: 87). Stelae with niches to place a divine image or representations of ediculae obviously served the same religious purpose because of the divine presence in the shrine.

The religious function of the stele may also be expressed by the symbols carved on it (see Chapter III). These religious or prophylactic symbols, some of which are believed to represent deities or beliefs related to the afterlife, aimed probably at facilitating or at protecting the eternal rest of the deceased.

Some of these symbols may have had apotropaic or magic functions and served at protecting either the tomb and/or the dead, or at preventing the spirit of the latter from coming back to haunt the living.

I.4 DESCRIPTION AND DATING OF THE STELAE

I.4.a Tell el-Burak

Stele 1 (Figs 2 and 3)

A stone stele inscribed with Phoenician letters was found during the 2002 season of excavation on the site of Tell el-Burak, while clearing the collapsed stones of the Iron Age fortification in Area 2 (Kamlah and Sader 2003). The stone was lying upside down with its inscribed upper part buried in the ground (Fig. 2). It had been uncovered in this position in the 2001 season but was left *in situ* since its inscription was not visible.

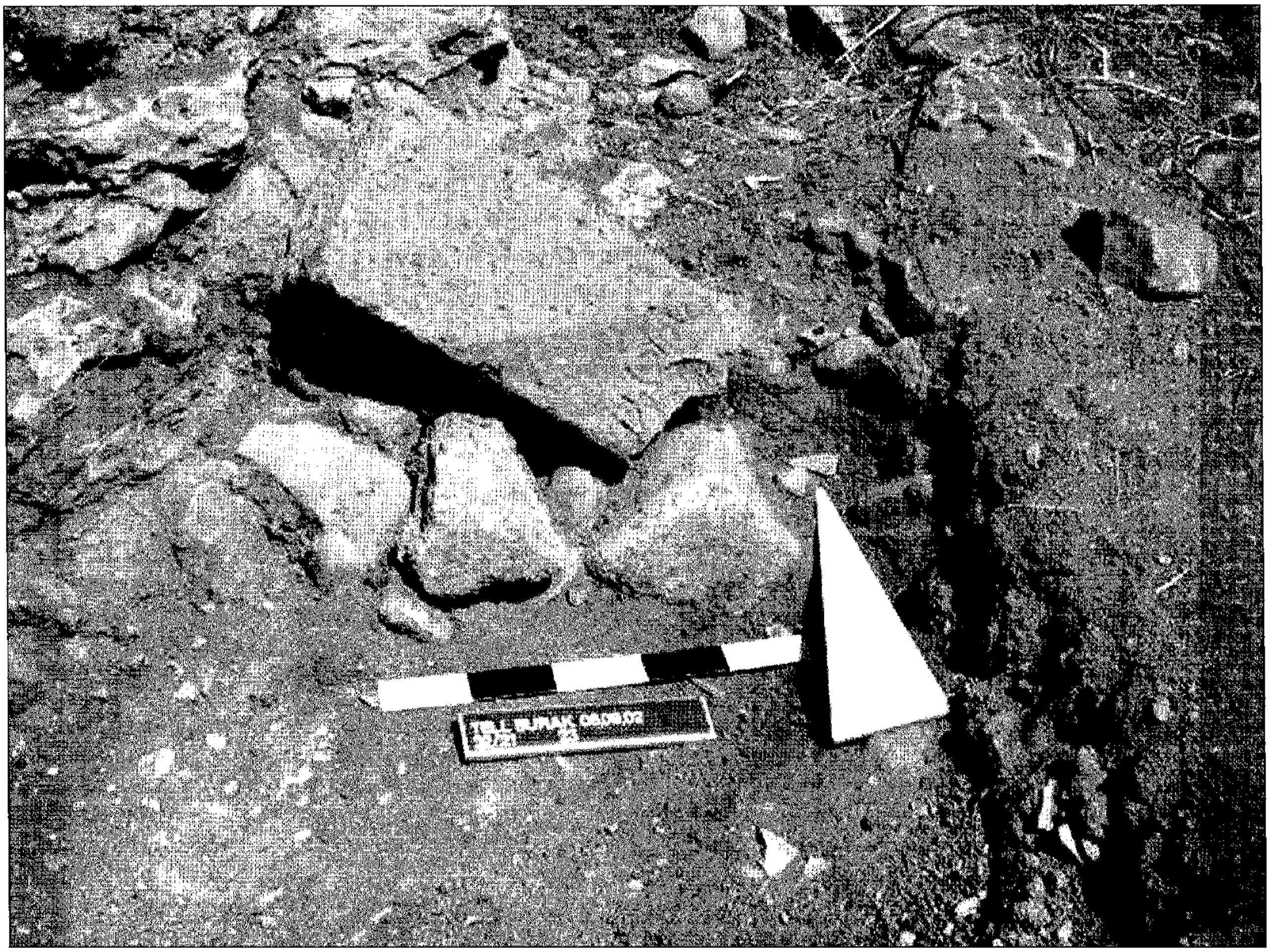


Fig. 2. Stele 1 *in situ*.

The Tell Burak stele is cut in the local beachrock, which was also used for the tombstones excavated in Tyre (Sader 1991, 1992, 2004, Lemaire 2001), Sidon (Teixidor 1982), Khaldé (Bordreuil 1982) and Akhziv (Cross 2002). The stone was probably damaged when it fell on its head during the collapse: a large break cut its upper part and partly obliterated the motif that was carved there. A partly preserved circular depression is all that remains of what might have been a sun-disc symbol. This motif, which is widely represented in the iconography of the Phoenician motherland (see Chapter III), is most likely to be restored on the Tell Burak stele.

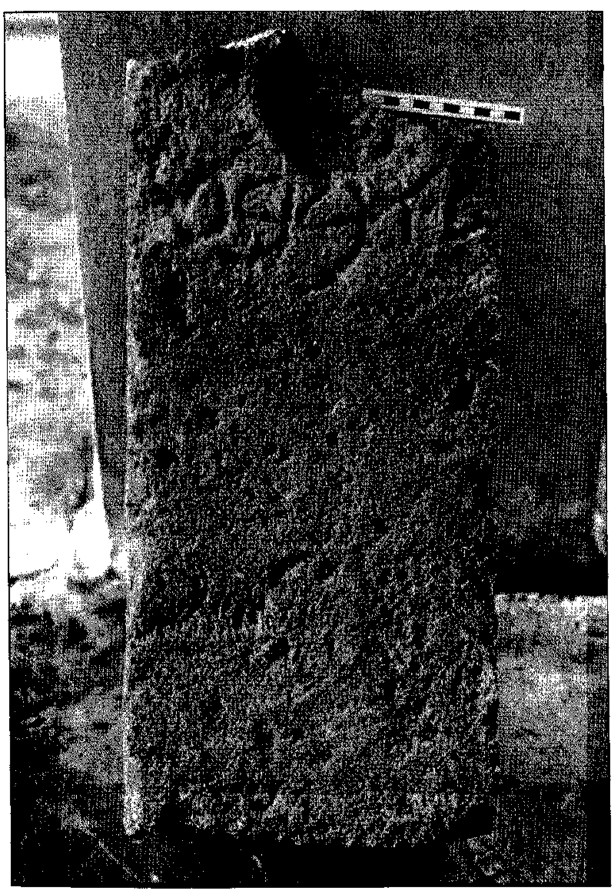
Below the circular cavity is a six-letter Phoenician inscription written in one curving line. The second and the last letter are partly destroyed but they can be both reasonably identified as *aleph* and *lamed* respectively. On the whole, the inscription is relatively well preserved and reads very clearly:

l'bb'l

«(Belonging) To Abibaal»

The inscription consists of the preposition *l* followed by a well-known Phoenician personal name meaning «My father is (the god) Baal». The fact that the stele is inscribed with a personal name and bears a divine symbol, a feature characteristic of Iron Age stelae found in Phoenician cemeteries in Lebanon, clearly suggests its funerary use. The stone was then obviously not in its original context and had been re-used in the building of the wall. It therefore antedates the building (or repair) of the collapsed Iron Age fortification. The funerary character of the stone suggests that it was probably brought from a nearby cemetery which has no been yet located.

The personal name, Abibaal, which is borne by a 10th c. B.C. king of Byblos, is widely attested in Phoenician onomastics (Benz 1972: 257). Usually, the personal name appears alone on the funerary stelae but it may also be preceded by the preposition *l*=«(Belonging) to». Parallels are well attested in the Akhziv (Cross 2002: Nos 1-5) as



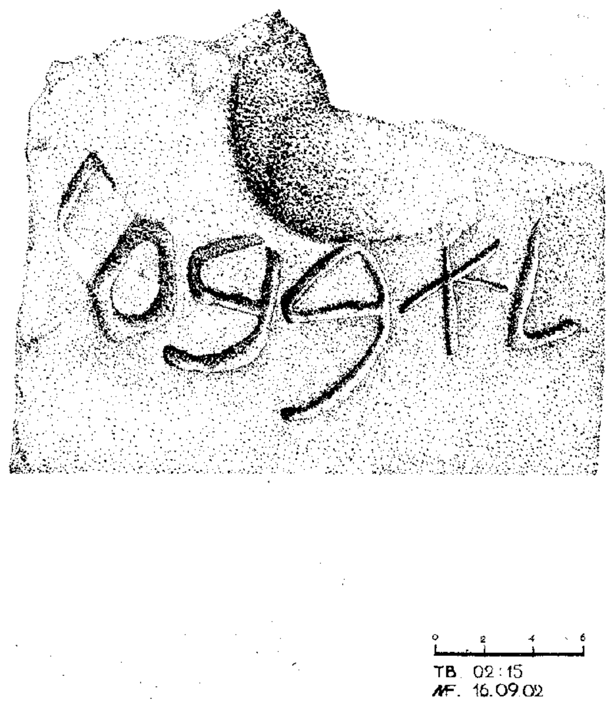


Fig. 3. Stele 1 *l'bb'l*.

well as in the Tyrian (Sader 1992: 59, Lemaire 2001: Nos 8 & 10) and Sidonian stelae inscriptions (Teixidor 1982). According to Cooke (1903: 60), personal names in funerary inscriptions are usually preceded by this preposition and the personal name following *l-* is understood to refer to a deceased adult.

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are of medium size, not exceeding 7cm in height. Four different letters are attested: *lamed* (written twice), *aleph, beth* (written twice), and *ayin.* Though written twice, only the first *lamed* is completely preserved. Its vertical shaft is rather short and slightly tilted to the right while its dropline is almost horizontal and short without a leftward curve. This form of the letter cannot be later than the sixth century B.C. and finds parallels in seventh and sixth century forms (Peckham 1968: 104, 4 & 9; 109, 3 & 5).

Aleph is more problematic because its upper part is lost in the break. What is clearly to be seen is the vertical shaft and one long oblique line cutting the former and continuing on its left side. The second oblique line of the *aleph* is not clearly preserved: a very thin horizontal incision appears below the long oblique crossline and meets it at a narrow angle to the right of the shaft. This line may however be simply accidental and one should not exclude the possibility that the second horizontal crossline of the *aleph* is above the first one and hence lost in the break. In any case it is clear that the crosslines do not meet at the left of the vertical shaft and this is an indication that the letter cannot be earlier than the mid-seventh century B.C. *Aleph* with headlines one shorter than the other is indeed attested since the mid-seventh century B.C. (Pekham 1968: 107). The two *beths* signs are written next to each other but while the first one is larger and has its shaft and tail drawn in a continuous curve, the second has a tail that breaks abruptly from the shaft forming a wide angle. Both heads are triangular and almost identical. The fact that these signs are still rather vertical and do not tilt to the left is an indication that they are earlier than the fifth century B.C. They indeed find their closest parallels in letters dated to the seventh and early sixth century B.C. (Peckham 1968: 105, 107, 109).

The palaeography of the inscription suggests a time range from the mid-seventh to the mid-sixth century B.C. The stone may have been used either in the original building of the wall or, more probably, when the Iron Age fortification underwent some sort of repair, sometime during the sixth century. Both assumptions are not incompatible with the archaeological evidence uncovered by the deep sounding in Area 2.



Fig. 4. Stele 2 *gtty*.

I.4.b KHALDE
Stele 2 (Fig. 4)

This is the only stele that was discovered by Roger Saidah (1966) in the Phoenician necropolis of Khalde, one of the largest Phoenician cemeteries discovered in Lebanon where some 400 tombs were excavated. It is cut in the local beach-rock and it has a trapezoidal shape. The only information related to its archaeological context is that it was found near tomb 121 (Saidah 1979: 215). Bordreuil (1982:191 & Fig.2) published its inscription but gave no information concerning its size, shape, and manufacture. No drawing of the stele is available. Since it was not stored in the DGA storage in Beirut, it was impossible to have a closer look at the stele in order to complete the documentation. It is probably in the DGA storage in Sidon, which has not been inventorized since the end of the war.

Curiously enough, the four-letter inscription was written lengthwise in the middle of the stone, in a long horizontal line starting near the foot and ending near the top, in such a way as to suggest that the stone was lying on its long side. Indeed, the signs cannot be properly read when the stele is standing vertically as it is supposed to have stood in Antiquity.

The inscription mentions the personal name *gtty* and it was correctly dated on palaeographic grounds to the second half of the 9th c. B.C. Bordreuil (1982:190-1) suggests two possible explanations for the personal name based on biblical parallels: either a gentilic, which seems plausible, or a music instrument.

I.4.c SIDON
Stele 3 (Fig. 5)

The stele is in the storage of the Directorate General of Antiquities. Because it lies under other very heavy stone monuments, which were very difficult to move, it was impossible to have a better photograph and to draw the tombstone. This is the only stele from the site of the Late Iron Age cemetery in Sidon Dakerman (Teixidor 1982: 233 ff), which Roger Saidah excavated (Saidah 1969: 122). Describing the cemetery, Saidah (1969: 122) says that «...*this is the first time we have uncovered such a number of Late Iron Age and Late Bronze Age burials*» and it is strange that no other stele was found in this large Sidonian cemetery. Khalde presents a similar case of a large Iron Age cemetery with only one discovered stele. As already suggested, the fact that such tombstones may have been re-used in later buildings or may have been overlooked could account for their absence in these cemeteries.

The stele is cut in a hard compacted beach-rock and the two-line inscription was read by Teixidor (1982: 233ff) *l'bh' bn mr'*. The reading *mem* in *mr'* is highly hypothetical: the recent examination of the stone, as well as a new but by no means excellent photograph, do not clearly show traces of the head of *mem*. Indeed, the only clear trace after *nun* is that of a vertical line slanting to the right, which could be part of either *mem* or *kaf*. Teixidor hesitated between the two possible readings of this sign and finally opted for *mem*. No better meaning is indeed

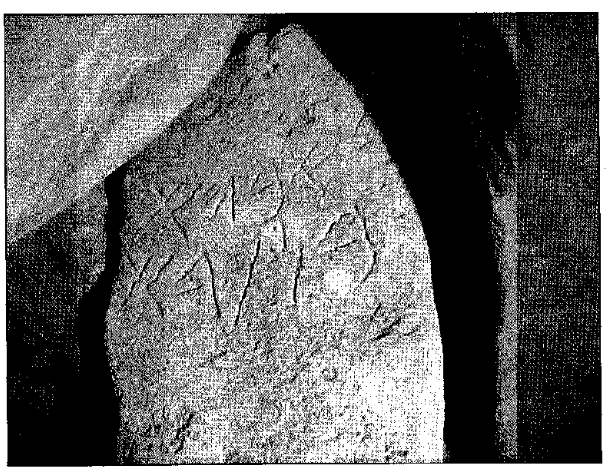


Fig. 5. Stele 3 *l'bh' bn mr'*.

gained if the inscription is read *kr'*. *mr'* was interpreted as an imperative Piel of a root *mrr* «to bless» with a hypocoristic ending, meaning «Bless oh DN». *'bh'* was interpreted as «DN is father».

Concerning the palaeography, three aleph signs are attested: while the first one has a slanting shaft and two cross-lines meeting at an angle to the left of it, the two others have the same vertical shaft slanting to the left and two parallel strokes for the head. Only the upper one cuts the vertical shaft and continues on the other side. This form appears in the 6th c. B.C. but becomes very common in the 5th c. B.C. Texidor suggested a date around 600 B.C. that is the very beginning of the 6th c. A slightly lower dating seems to find supporting evidence in the shape of the sign *he,* which finds parallels in the Sidonian inscriptions of Eshmunazar and Tabnit and with the general archaeological context of the cemetery which is dated roughly by the excavator to the Late Iron Age.

I.4.d TYRE

I.4.d$_1$ TYRE 1991: Stelae in the Directorate General of Antiquities Collection in Beirut
Stele 4 (Fig. 6)

This stele was cut in the local beach-rock. It has a dense texture and is of a pink color. It has a clearly defined base or «foot» 15 x 17 cm, and roughly smoothed front and sides while the back is irregular and only crudely hammered. Eight Phoenician letters of medium size, 5-7 cm, written in two lines are very badly preserved, because of the weathering of the stone. We tentatively read:

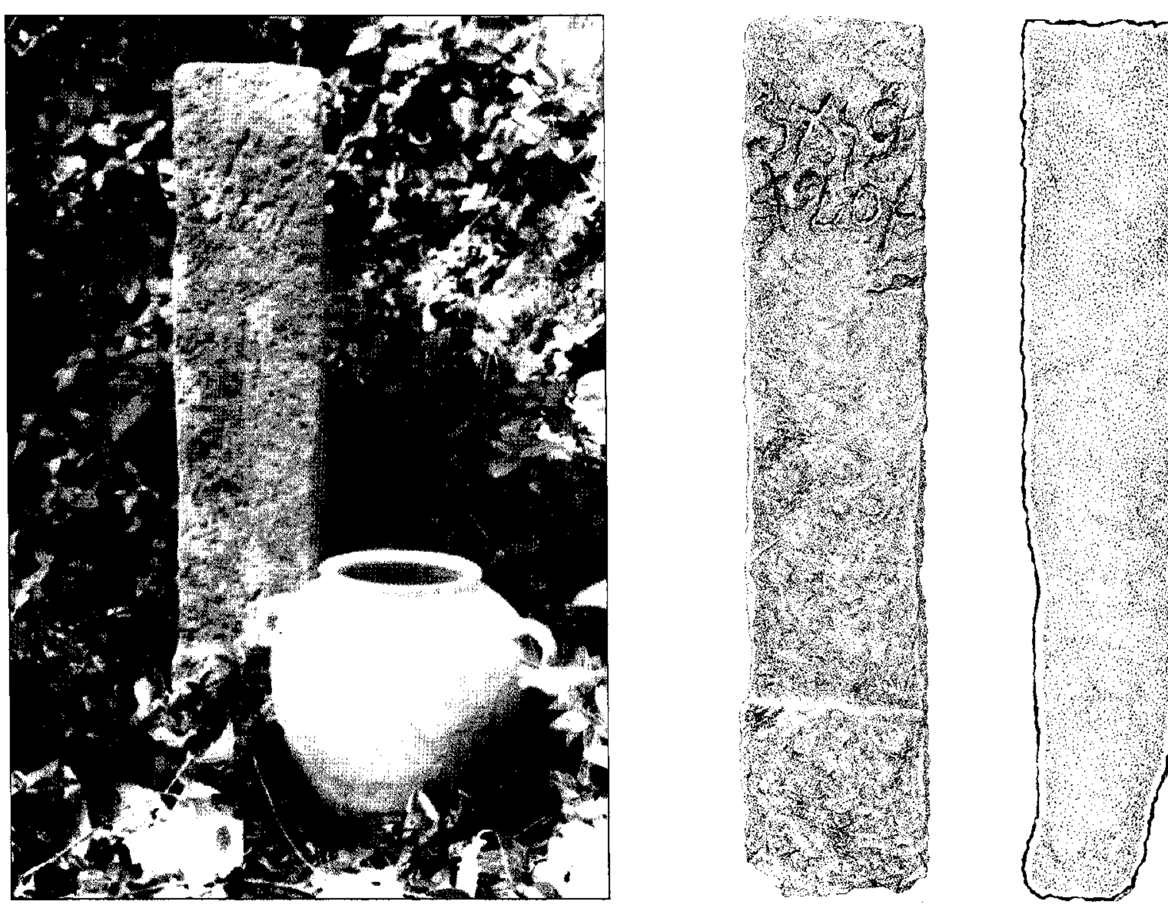


Fig. 6. Stele 4 *bn tnt'l'*.

bn tn

t 'l'

The last letter of the first line is only partly preserved but, from what is left, it is clearly to be restored as *nun*. The reading of the remaining letters is fairly certain in spite of the fact that they are badly eroded.

Concerning the palaeography, *beth* has a large rounded head, too big for the thin angular shaft as to suggest at first sight a reading *ayin*. This form of the letter finds its closest parallels in inscriptions from the *tophet* of Motya assigned to level IV and dated to the end of the 6th c. B.C. (Amadasi-Guzzo 1986: 14 & Pl. 2). The cross-shaped *taws* and *lamed* with its rounded, upward curving shaft are not attested after the 7th c. B.C. The *nuns* have rounded edges, short heads and long shafts. *Aleph* consists of two oblique lines joining at the left of a shaft. This shape is well attested in 7th and 6th c. inscriptions (Ur box and Hassanbeyli). The palaeographic evidence suggests a date in the late 7th or in the 6th c. B.C., at the latest.

The inscription is clearly a personal name, *bn tnt 'l'*, attested here for the first time. This name is a construct-phrase name according to the terminology of Benz (1972:287 & chapter III). This type of name is often attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 288; Halff 1963-64: 98). However, it presents some interesting features worthy of remark: first, it is a theophorous name built with the divine element Tanit. Only two such names are attested in Phoenicia, *'bdtnt* and *grtnt* (Bordreuil 1987: 80; Amadasi-Guzzo 1991: 83). According to Bordreuil, the name of Tanit is also attested on clay bullae from Lebanon (1987: 83-84) where it is however mistakenly written as *tmt*. This corrected reading is rejected by Lemaire (1991:115) who proposes for *bn tmt* the meaning of «*magasin de TMT*», *tmt* being either a toponym or a personal name. Lipinski (1995: 202) in his recent study of this Phoenician goddess opted for the first interpretation.

Second, the third element of this name, *'l'*, has no parallel in Phoenician and Punic personal names. The interpretation of this element is controversial. *'l'* is attested as a feminine personal name on an Ammonite seal (Lemaire 1983: 21 & Aufrecht 1989 under *'l'* with related literature). According to Lemaire (1983: 21), «*Ce nom peut s'expliquer soit comme le nom divin abrégé de Elyon =le Très Haut, soit comme un hypocoristique signifiant que la divinité "a élevé"*». Aufrecht (1989) suggests that the name is either a hypocoristic using the root *'ly* «to go up», a divine name or an epithet meaning «The High One». It is this last meaning that best fits the personal name attested here. The name would mean: «Son of Tanit, The High One». If this interpretation is correct, we would have a new epithet of the goddess Tanit, attested here for the first time. This epithet would be an indication of the leading position and role Tanit held in the Phoenician pantheon. The implication would be that the Tanit cult was as important in Phoenicia as it was in Carthage.

Stele 5 (Fig. 7)

This stele was cut in the local beach-rock and has a loose texture and a pink color. It has a slightly protruding, 3 cm deep, lower edge. It is very roughly smoothed on all four sides and is in a good state of preservation.

On the upper front and almost exactly in the middle, there is an engraved 4.5 cm wide and 6.5 cm high circular motif. This symbol is clearly a miniature sun disc and not the letter *ayin* for two main reasons: first, the motif is clearly centered above the inscription on top of the stele: it cannot be the first letter of the personal name as it stands alone in the middle of the line. Second, the four remaining letters form a perfectly clear and well-attested personal name and the inclusion of a letter *ayin* will result in an incomprehensible letter group. Incised small solar discs are often attested alone in Carthage (Picard 1976: 80). They are also attested in the iconography of the ancient Near East, mainly on seals (see for example Uehlinger 1988: 22, Fig. 6 and 23, Fig. 7).

The stone is inscribed with four deeply chiseled, outsize (9-16 cm) and very well preserved Phoenician letters written in an irregular way.

l

b'

y

Lamed is correctly written at the beginning of the line but the following *beth* is written on a lower level right below the sun disc. It seems that the scribe started writing the name of the dedicator but soon realized that he had forgotten the motif after the first letter had been written. Since he had started almost at the top, he did not have enough space above his first line for the symbol. That is probably why he chose to incise the sun disc on top and, as a result, had to write the remaining letters on a lower level. This assumption is not far-fetched because *beth* and *aleph* are correctly incised side by side on the same line. The fourth letter, *yod*, was then written alone on a new line.



Fig. 7. Stele 5 *lb'y*.

Concerning the palaeography, *lamed* is strongly tilted to the right and has a rounded tail. *Beth* presents no significant characteristics. The head of *aleph* is completely eroded: what is left of the two oblique stokes is a trapezoidal cavity with its wide base to the left of a very long shaft. It is difficult to decide whether the two strokes joined or not to the left of the shaft. *Alephs* with long shafts are generally late. However, this feature is also found in 8th/7th c. inscriptions (Peckham 1968:105). *Yod* is the only letter, which has a shape characteristic enough to provide a solid clue to date the inscription. It is strongly tilted to the left with an angular head and a very long tail at a right angle, a shape common in 7th c. B.C. inscriptions (Peckham 1968:107). It is to this century that we tentatively date this stele.

The personal name *lb'y* is a hypocoristic meaning «DN is a lion». This name is attested in Mari and, according to Huffmon (1965: 225), *lb'* could also be a theophorous or a divine name. Ribichini and Xella (1991:164) also consider *lb'* as a theophorous element in Ugaritic onomastics. The same name, *Lab'ayu*, is also attested in the Amarna letters as the name of the mayor of Shechem (Moran 1987: 581). The feminine form *lb't* in *'bdlb't*, is attested on a proto-Canaanite arrowhead from el Khadr (*KAI* No 21). *lb'* is attested once in Punic (Benz 1972:337 and Amadasi-Guzzo 1967: 99). The name on stele 5 is, to my knowledge, the first occurrence of the name in Phoenician onomastics.

Stele 6 (Fig. 8a-c)

This stele is also cut in the local-beach rock. It has a loose texture and is of a reddish yellow color. It is neatly cut and roughly smoothed on all four faces. The sides are heavily eroded. Two major breaks can be seen: one on the lower front and the other on the upper right front. This second break destroyed the beginning of the second line. On the back of the stele, there is a 21 cm high *ankh* sign. It is the only stele with a motif on its back. This *ankh* symbol has ma y parallels in the East where it appears on many seals and scarabs (Bordreuil 1986: Nos 15, 18; Pritchard 1988: Fig. 17, 3; Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 32a, 32d, 34c, 79d, 92a;), on funerary stelae (Delavault-Lemaire 1979: Pl. III, 5; Cross 2002: Fig. App. 1.4), ivories (Barnett 1975: Fig. C 48), as well as on metal bowls (Markoe 1985: E 1).

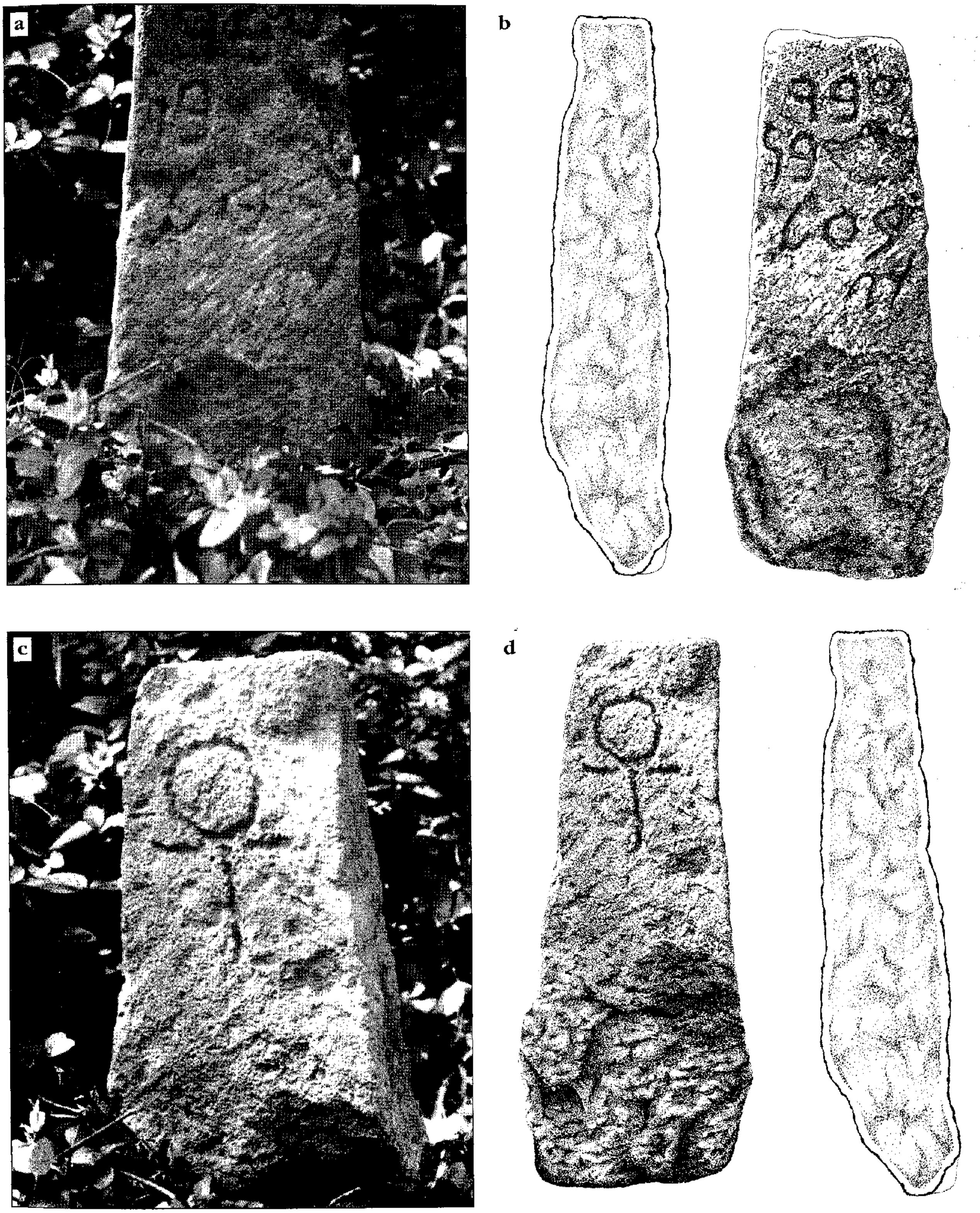


Fig. 8. Stele 6 (a) Frontside with inscription *'bd[xx] bn b'ly*, (b) drawing of frontside, (c) backside with *ankh* sign, (d) backside drawing and section.

On its front, the stele bears a Phoenician inscription written in four lines. The only difficulty with this otherwise unproblematic inscription lies in the beginning of the second line, which has been damaged by a break. Between the edge of the stele and the first readable letter of line 2, there is a space 12 cm wide. In other words, there is enough room for two letters and this is confirmed on the one hand, by the fact that this space corresponds exactly to that occupied by the first two letters of line1 and, on the other, because the first readable letter of line 2 is exactly below the third letter of line 1. So we have to assume that two letters have to be restored at the beginning of line 2.

The rest of the inscription can be read without difficulty:

'bd
[xx] bn
b'l
y

The inscription gives the name of the dedicator and that of his father. The first element of the dedicator's name is *'bd* =slave, servant. This implies that the second element of the name lost in the break must be either a divine name or a hypocoristic ending. In the first case, the divine name could be either a bi-literal name like *'s* = Isis, *bl* = Bel, *hr* = Horus, *ṣd* or *'l* (for theophorous names built with *'bd*, see Benz 1972: 371) or a shortened form of a divine name. Any suggestion as to the identification of this divine element will remain conjectural. In the case of a hypocoristic ending, we have to assume that only one letter is missing in the break and not two since hypocoristica are built by adding *aleph*, *taw*, *yod* or *mem* to the remaining element (Benz 1972: 232-235). A third attractive possibility may be offered to us: the personal name could be *'bd[ny]*, a name attested on an arrowhead from Lebanon. According to Bordreuil (1982: 190), the name is a gentilic, and *'bdn-* is a well attested toponym in the Bible, possibly located at Kh. Abde, 15 km northeast of Akko. The dedicator is son of *b'ly*, a hypocoristic name formed with the divine element Baal and widely attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 94 & 289).

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are of medium size, 5-8 cm, and rather shallow. Two of the three *beths* have rounded heads and shafts curving at right angles, while the third one has a more angular head and an oblique shaft. *Daleth* has a round head and is close to shapes found in inscriptions from level IV of the *tophet* of Motya dated to the 6th c. B.C. (Amadasi-Guzzo 1986: 14 & Pl. 2). *Lamed* has a rounded and upward curving tail. Here again, *yod* is the most significant sign for the dating of the inscription. It is horizontal with a rounded head and a tail curving at right angle. This shape finds a very close parallel in the Ipsambul inscription dated to 591 B.C. (Peckham 1968:107). The stele may be dated to the 6th c. B.C.

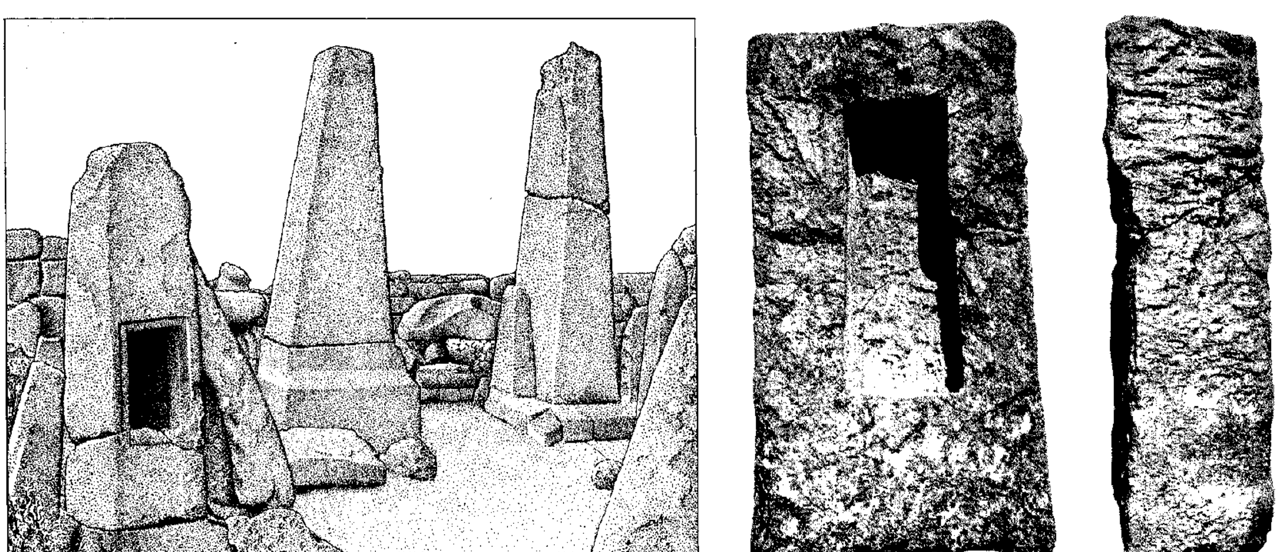


Fig. 9. Parallels to *naos* motif on Stele 7 from Byblos (left Seeden 1980: Pl. 134: 2) and Tharros (right Moscati 1985b: Pl. XI: 33).

Stele 7 (Fig. 10)

This stele is cut in the loosely cemented variety of beach-rock. It has a pink color, is well cut and very roughly smoothed. The stone is badly eroded and broken at its lower right angle. A *naos*, consisting of an empty niche, 20 cm high, 12 cm wide and 5.5 cm deep, is cut in the middle front. Parallels are widely attested in the Punic world. Examples are known from Carthage, Tharros (Moscati 1985b: XI: 33; XII: 35; XVIII: 48; XXVIII: 74; XLIX: 125) and Sulcis (Bartoloni 1986: X: 70; CXXIX: 1050; CXXX: 1051; CL: 1541; CLI: 1550 being the closest parallel). Shrines are already attested in the Obelisk temple in Byblos and the standing armed figurines of bronze might in some cases have been placed there (Seeden 1980: 153 and Pl. 134: 2, 135: 4).

A Phoenician inscription in one line starts on top of the stele above the niche and continues down to the left of it in two short lines. The letter before the last has been badly damaged by a break on the left edge and the fourth and last letters are partly destroyed but legible. The inscription reads:

ʿštrt
l[ʾ]
t

We are clearly in the presence of a theophorous name built with the divine element *ʿštrt*. The second element is difficult to read. The first letter is clearly *lamed* and the third one is *taw* recognizable at its preserved lower part still showing the two crossed oblique lines. In the break following *lamed*, only one letter can be restored. Given the size of the letters and the space available in the break, there is no room for more than one sign. Of the lost letter, a horizontal stroke in its upper right part, a short oblique one in its lower right and the bottom of a vertical shaft are still to be seen, suggesting either *taw*, *samekh* or most probably *aleph*. A reading *taw* is the less probable because the other three *taws* of the inscription are clearly X-shaped .The other two possible readings of the second element are *l[s]t* and *l[ʾ]t*. The first one cannot be explained while the second may present an attractive and adequate meaning. *lʾt* could be a feminine Qal participle of the root *lʾy* = «to prevail, to be strong», attested in Ugaritic and in Phoenician and Punic names like *ʿbdlʾ* or *ʿbdl* and possibly meaning «The Mighty One» (Benz 1972: 336-337). The feminine form *lʾt* in *ʿštrtl[ʾ]t* could be understood as a title of Astarte: «Astarte the Mighty One», a personal name attested here for the first time.

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are deeply incised and of medium size, 4-7 cm. *šin* has a clear W-shape attested in 10th to 7th c. B.C. inscriptions. The three *taws* are X-shaped with the two cross lines almost of the same length, similar to very early forms of the sign in the Ahiram, Yehimilk, Elibaal, Šipitbaal I, Abdo and Nora ins-

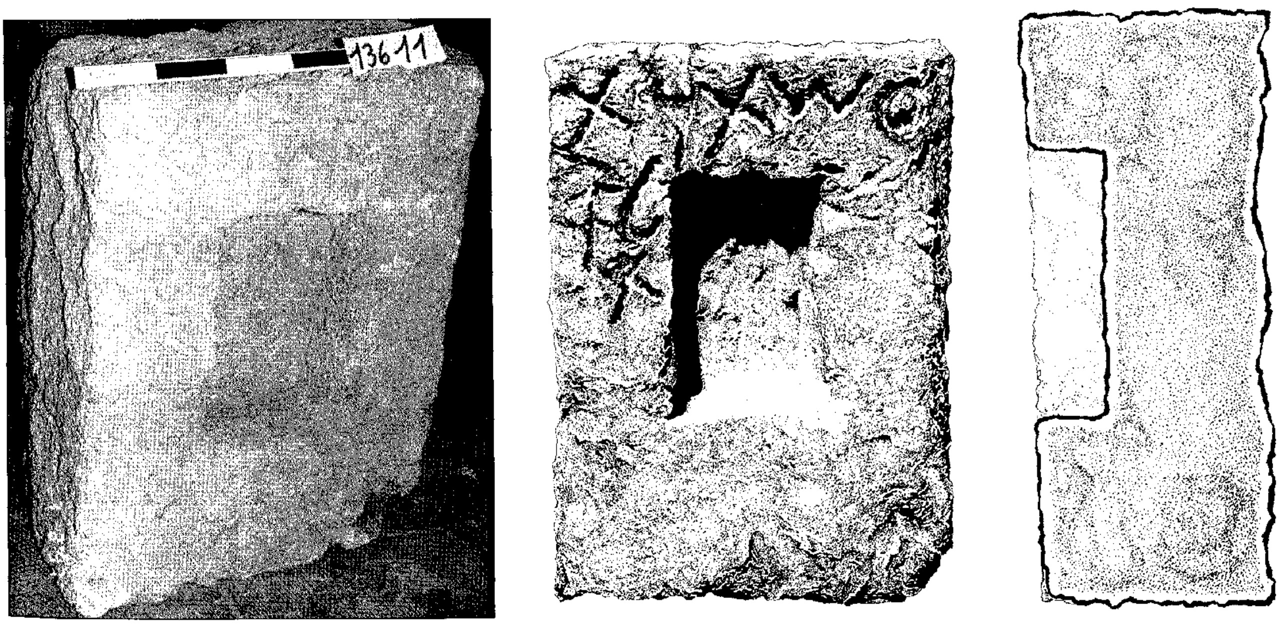


Fig. 10. Stele 7 *ʿštr t l[ʾ]t*.

criptions (*KAI* nos 1, 4, 6, 7,8 & 46). This form is not attested after the 9th c. B.C. The palaeographic evidence suggests a date in the 9th c. B.C.

Stele 8 (Fig. 11)

This stele was cut in the hard variety of the beach-rock. It is a rectangular stone with a rounded top. It has a pinkish-white color. The stone has a clearly defined foot 21.5 cm high, 22 cm wide and 18.5 cm deep. With the exception of the foot and back, the stele is very nicely smoothed. However, its upper edge shows signs of erosion on all sides and this is most probably due to the fact that with time, the stone was entirely buried in the ground and only its top remained exposed. The stele is inscribed with seven well-preserved Phoenician letters written in two lines:

l'mt
šmn

«(Belonging) to *'mtšmn*». Feminine personal names built with the element *'mt* = female servant and a divine name are widely attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 270). The specific form *'mtšmn* = «Female servant of the god Eshmun», is, to my knowledge, the first occurrence of this name in Phoenician. The form *šmn* for *'šmn* is often attested (Benz 1972: 279). The personal name is preceded by the preposition *l-* (for this feature see stele 1).

Concerning the palaeography, the letters of this inscription are thin and of medium size. *Lamed* has a slightly rounded shaft and an almost horizontal tail. *Aleph* has two strokes joining at a narrow angle to the left of a straight vertical shaft. Similar shapes are attested in the inscription from Kition and on the crater from Sidon published by Puech (1994), both dated to the 8th c. B.C. The first *mem* is problematic: it was first mistakenly written as *resh* and then corrected into a *mem*. The triangular head of *resh* is still to be seen under the three vertical and parallel strokes of *mem* 's head. It is only when the light hits the stone at a certain angle that the head of *mem* becomes clearly



Fig. 11. Stele 8 *l'mtšmn*.

visible. This form of the letter is attested in 8th c. B.C. inscriptions like the Sidon crater and a Tyrian seal published by Bordreuil (1986: 7). It is a common 8th c. shape of the sign attested on other Tyrian stelae (for instance stele 14, 21, 34). The second *mem* of the inscription is slightly different: its head has a zigzag shape and its shaft is vertical. Similar forms are found in the Karatepe and Limassol inscriptions both dated to the 8th c. B.C. *Taw* is cross-shaped with a vertical long vertical shaft. Here again the closest parallels are dated to the 8th c. (Limassol and crater inscriptions). *šin* has an open W-shape not attested after the 7th c. *Nun* has a hooked head with no exact parallels and a long vertical shaft. The palaeographic evidence dates the stele to the 8th or early 7th c. B.C.

Stele 9 (Fig. 12)

This is the only stele cut in limestone. The core color of the stone is pink while the patina is lighter. The stele is trapezoidal in shape. Its upper left edge is broken, causing slight damage to the represented head. The upper half of the stone's front has been smoothed in order to receive the carving while its lower part is very roughly hewn. The face and neck of a person likely to be a woman are represented. No hair or hair-dress is visible. The face is round with a pointed chin. The eyebrows carved in relief, join on top of the nose. The eyes rest in two shallow cavities. The eyelids are fine but the pupil is not represented giving the face an undefined and mysterious look. The flat triangular nose and the thin lips add to this impression. The neck is very thin (5.5 x 6 cm) giving the figure a fragile aspect. This stele is now on display in the Beirut National Museum.

The human head represented on the stele has a striking parallel from Carthage (Ferron 1975: Pl. CXXXVII and CXLIX) This and other North African examples are always depicted with a raised right hand and belong to a specific type of funerary stelae representing the deified dead person (Ferron 1975: 261ff). Human heads comparable to this one are also attested in the *tophet* of Monte Sirai (Bondì 1972: Pl.LVII: 1) and in Motya (Tusa 1982: Pl. XIV e). For the interpretation of these figures, see Chapter III.

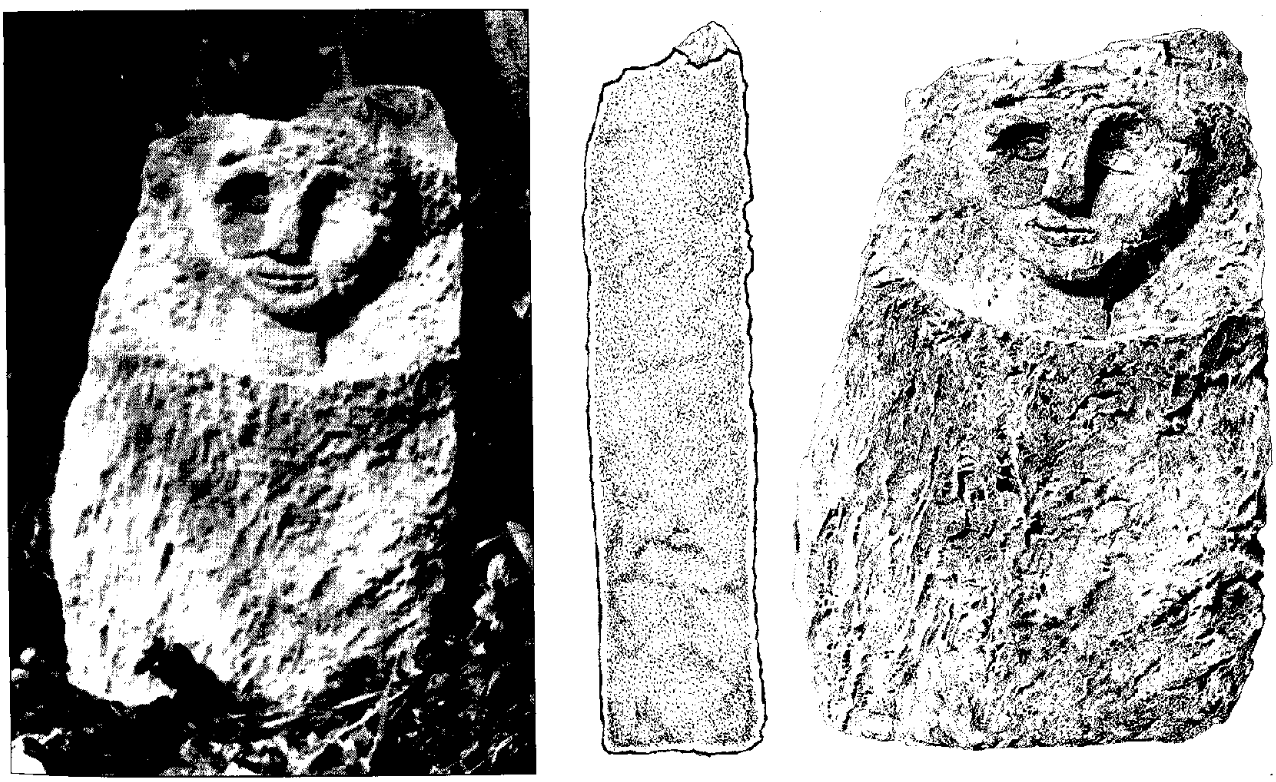


Fig. 12. Stele 9 Human head.



Fig. 13. A Carthaginian parallel to Stele 9 (Ferron 1975: Pl. CXXXVII).

Stele 10 (Fig. 14)

This stele was cut in a calcareous, cemented beach-rock. It has a dense texture and is of a pinkish white color.

The stone has neatly cut angles and a nicely smoothed front. Its left side is broken. The front shows the lintel, architrave and sides of a small shrine. The top of the shrine consists of two parallel horizontal grooves surmounted by a small rectangular platform 10 cm wide, bearing a round symbol, most probably a sun disc with a vertical line attached to its bottom. This type of shrine imitates Egyptian prototypes (Wagner 1980, mainly p.123 ff.). The sides of the shrine are very deeply hewn forming a right angle on top, possibly representing two columns. In-

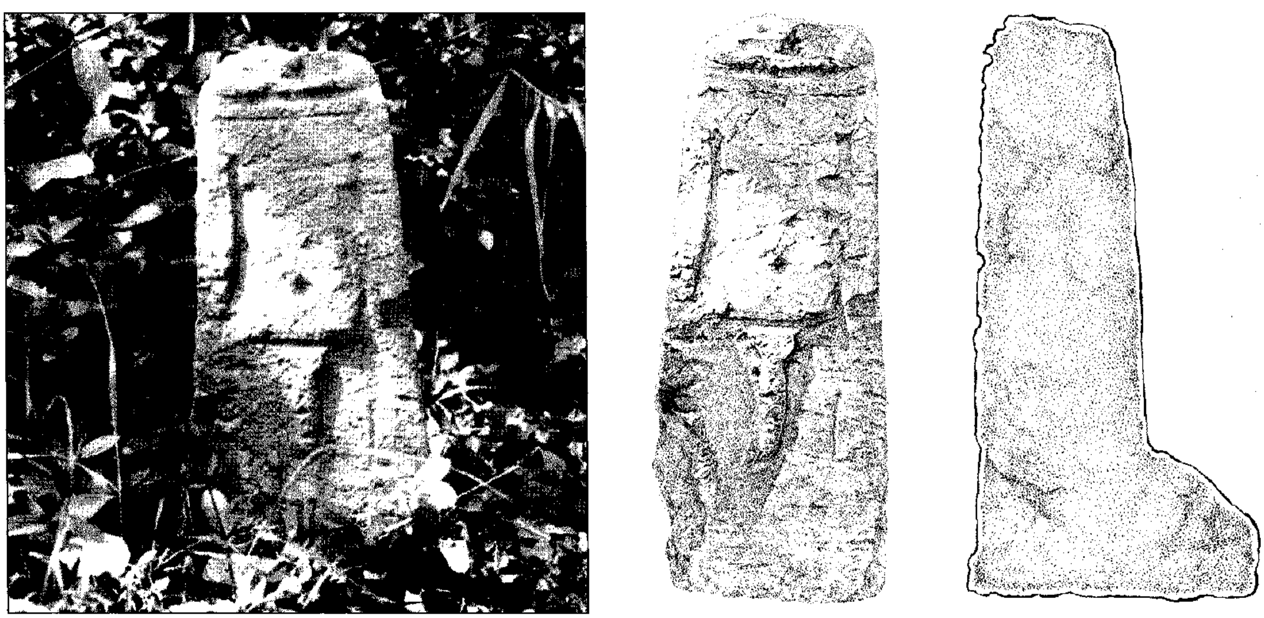


Fig. 14. Stele 10 Shrine with phallic symbol.

side the shrine, in the middle of its lower section, there is a hole, which looks like a navel. It is possible that the sto-necutter intended to carve a niche or any other symbol but did not complete his work but it is also possible that it is indeed a navel for below this hole there is another enigmatic representation. It consists of a long vertical protu-berance with a rounded lower end resembling a phallus. If this interpretation is correct, this shrine may have been dedicated to the god Pa'am, whose name according to Lipinski (1995: 215) means phallus. The symbol would be half architectural and half anthropomorphic, its lower part representing the lower part of a human body with the navel and the male sexual organ. It would be indeed the first attested representation of the god Pa'am. But this pro-tuberance could also be a sort of handle for a portable shrine model or the socket or foundation of the shrine.

This shrine has no exact parallels although small shrines are very common on Punic stelae. The Egyptian ty-pe of lintel is well attested elsewhere in the West, mainly in Tharros (Moscati 1985b: XVII, 45,47) and in Sulcis (Bar-toloni 1986: XXVI, 163). The small solar disc surmounting the shrine is also regularly attested on Punic stelae.

Stele 11 (Fig. 15)

This stele is cut in a loosely cemented and coarse beach rock. The color is pinkish gray and the lower left corner is damaged. The symbol on the front is ovoid in shape with a short vertical stem at its bottom and two horns or lea-ves at the top. This plant symbol, fruit or flower, has no exact parallel on Punic stelae. Motifs representing vegetal symbols are widely attested in Carthage. The closest parallels to this motif seem to be the pomegranate, lily and lo-tus flowers (Picard 1978: 51ff.). The most striking parallels are however the lotus bud representations on the Ahi-ram sarcophagus and on the Phoenician *naiskoi* of the Persian period, which have on their lintel a row of alterna-ting, open and closed lotus flowers (see stele 58). Phoenician ivory blinkers from Nimrud (Orchard 1967: Nos 71-72, 74ff.; 91ff., 186-7), as well as Phoenician bowls from Cyprus and Etruria (Markoe 1985: Cy-21; E-13) also have si-milar lotus bud motifs. These parallels show that similar short-stemmed vegetal motifs were common in the art of Phoenicia from the 8^{th} to the 5^{th} c. B.C.

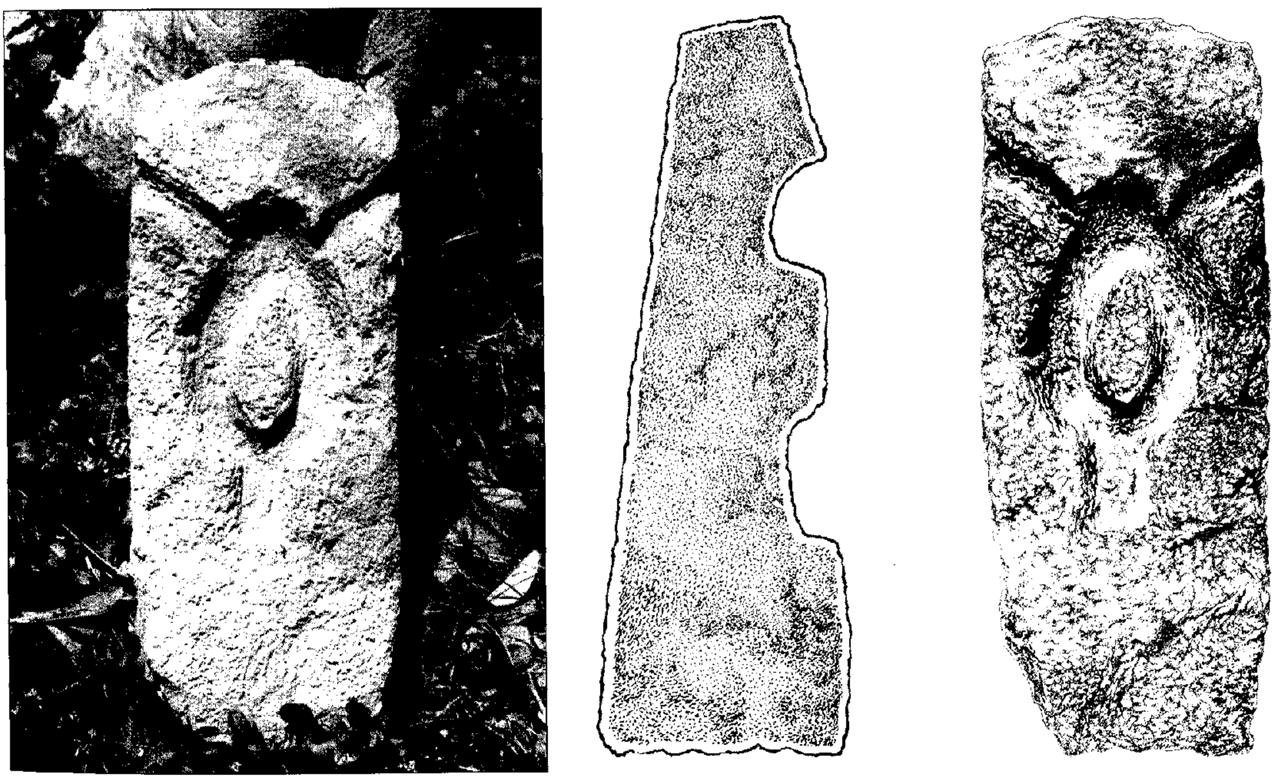


Fig. 15. Stele 11 Lotus bud.



Fig. 16. A parallel to Stele 11 from Nimrud (Orchard 1967: 187).

Stele 12 (Fig. 17)

This stele is of the well-cemented, harder and denser variety of beach rock. Its color is pink. The stone is L-shaped and its vertical part narrows towards the top. It is roughly smoothed on the front and sides. Its lower left corner is broken.

The upper part of the stele has four vertical parallel incisions. These lines may be coarse representations of *uraei*. *Uraei* are very common on Oriental and Punic stelae and they usually decorate their upper part. Simplified representations of this motif as attested on this stone, are found on stelae from Monte Sirai (Bondì 1972: V, 9; VIII, 16; XXVII, 58; see also stele 48). It is to be noted that *uraei* usually surmount the crescent-disc as is also the case here: Under the four lines there is a crescent moon turned downward containing a small solar disc. The crescent-disc motif is one of the most widespread symbols on Punic stelae. It is also attested on 6th c. Cypriot shrine models (Bretschneider 1991: Pl. 99-102). Under these motifs, five Phoenician letters written in two lines are clearly readable:

grḥ
mn

The personal name *grḥmn*, «Client of (the god Baal) Hamon» or «Client of the *ḥmn*» is attested here for the first time. Names formed with the element *gr* followed by a divine name are widely attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 298; Halff 1963-4:105). However, names with the divine name *ḥmn* are rare: they are

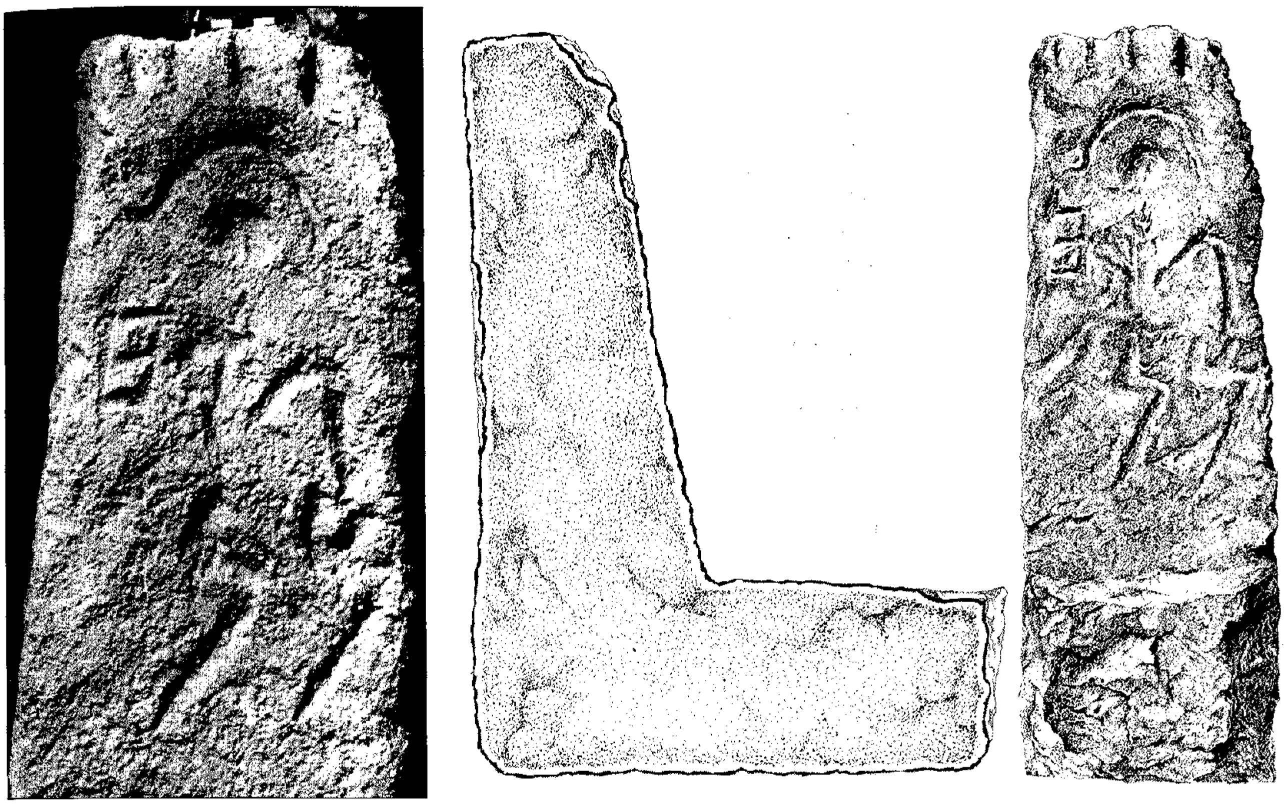


Fig. 17. Stele 12 *grḥmn.*



Fig. 18. A parallel to uraei and crescent-disc symbols of Stele 12 from Monte Sirai (Bondi 1972 or Studi Semitici 11).

not attested in Carthage (Halff 1964-5:65) but they are known in Ugaritic (Gröndhal 1967:135,230) and in an 11th c. Byblian inscription (Cross-McCarter 1973:3-8) where the name *abdḥmn* is attested. Xella, in his recent and comprehensive study on the god Baal Hamon (1991:36), rightly observes the uninterrupted use of *ḥmn* in Ugaritic and Phoenician personal names (see also Chapter II.3).

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are deeply cut and of medium size. *Gimmel, resh* and *ḥet* are between 6 and 7 cm long while *mem* and *nun* are 11 cm high.

Gimmel has a rounded angle and its right side is clearly longer than its left one. This shape finds its closest parallel in the Karatepe inscriptions dated to the 8th c. B.C. *Resh* has a rounded head, which compares best with the inscriptions from Motya dated to the 6th c. B.C. (Amadasi-Guzzo 1986: 13 & 71ff.), but it is also very close to the Karatepe inscriptions. *Ḥet* is of a straight, vertical, three-barred shape comparable to earlier forms of the letter. Its left vertical side is longer than the right. *Mem* has an indented slanting head and an oblique shaft similar to well known shapes of the 8th and 7th c. B.C. (Tamassos, Kition and Hassanbeyli). *Nun* has an angular head and an oblique shaft again close to 8th/7th c. shapes, mainly Karatepe and Hassanbeyli. However, this shape occurs also as late as the 4th c. B.C. The palaeographic evidence, mainly the shapes of *ḥet* and *mem,* which are the most significant, suggests a date in the 8th or the 7th c. B.C. at the latest.

Stele 13 (Fig. 19)

This stele is cut in the hard, well-cemented variety of beach rock and is pink in color. It is a regularly cut stone with a rounded top, and smoothed front and sides. Its lower front is slightly damaged and several small breaks can be seen on its left side. Its clearly defined «foot» or base measures 19.5 x 19.5 cm.

On the upper half of the stone a very well preserved but somewhat problematic Phoenician inscription is written in four lines. It clearly reads:

tnt
šb' '
št 'l
m

The first difficulty lies in the fact that the three letters of the divine name Tanit are much larger (7 to 8,5 cm) than the remaining signs of the inscription (3 to 5cm).

The same phenomenon is also attested on stele 31 (Lemaire 2001: Fig. 1). There the first three signs of the votary's name, *mbry,* are written bigger than the others. This clearly indicates that emphasized signs are not restricted to divine names and this recurring feature may be explained by a certain scribal tradition or fashion which consisted in emphasizing the first three letters of the inscription.

Another parallel is the 6th/5th c. B.C. Aramaic inscription of Daskyleion (Altheim-Stiehl and Cremer 1985: 6ff. and Pl. I, b)[3]. The first line of this inscription has an outsize *yod* written alone in the middle of the line, almost double the size of the other *yods* of the text (p.6). One possibility is to interpret this «capital» letter as an abbreviation of the divine name *YHWH* (p.7), and in this case it would be a very interesting parallel to the divine name Tanit as it is written on stele 13. But even if the *yod* does not refer to a divine name, this Aramaic text is very important in this context because it also attests the use of letters of different sizes in the same inscription.

The second problem is related to the personal name: should Tanit be understood as part of a personal name *tntšb'* or is it the name of the goddess followed by that of the deceased? Before the publication of stele 31, the first alternative would have been difficult to accept. Now, the evidence of stele 31 makes it likely that the personal name should be *tntšb'*= «Tanit is abundance». This personal name is however not attested.

The other alternative is to consider Tanit as an independent divine name used as an invocation at the beginning of the inscription but it should then be preceded by the preposition *l-* (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: §317,1). The personal name *šb'*= «abundance, plenty, corn» (Tomback 1978; Fuentes Estañol 1980; compare Benz 1972: 413 «to swear») is otherwise not problematic: it is attested together with *šb'tn* in Neopunic (*KAI* 149 and 146). The personal name *šb't* is also attested on stele 39.

šb' is the wife (*'št*) of *'lm.* (Compare *KAI* 149:» *lšb' bt y'skt'n 'št m'grs'n*). *'lm* could be understood either as standing for *'l'm*= «the god is with (me)» (Fuentes Estañol 1980: 67), or as a hypocoristic built with the element *'l*

3. This reference was kindly brought to my attention by Mme Hélène Lozachmeur



Fig. 19. Stele 13 *tntšb' št 'lm.*

or *'lm* = «god/s» (for personal names built with *'lm*=gods, see Benz 1972: 267). Both *šb'* and *'lm* are attested in Phoenician onomastics for the first time.

Concerning the palaeography, the *taus* of the inscription are clearly cross-shaped: two are upright and one is slightly bent. This form of the letter does not appear after the 7th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968: 104-106). The two *šins* provide a good *terminus post quem* for the inscription: they have lost the W-shape and their form, one with a rounded and the other with an angular V-shaped bottom, does not occur before the 6th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968: 106). *Lamed* provides a *terminus ante quem* with its vertical shaft, which is not attested after the 6th c. (Peckham 1968: 108). The above evidence already sets the time range for our stele: it is to be dated between the end of the 7th and the end of the 6th c. B.C. *Bet, ayin, mem* and *aleph* also fit this time bracket. It is to be noted that the two *alephs* of this inscription are not identical: the first one has almost parallel head lines, both of them cut by a vertical shaft while the other one has two lines joining at a round angle to the left of the shaft. These two forms are also attested simultaneously in the Ipsamboul inscription dated 591 B.C.

Stele 14 (Fig. 20)

This stele is of the hard, well-cemented variety of beach rock and is of a pink color. It is square and rather flat with irregular sides and edges. On the roughly smoothed front, a crescent-disc is represented above seven Phoenician letters written in two lines. The inscription reads clearly:

mlqrt
'b

«Melqart is (my) father». Personal names formed with the divine name Melqart are extremely common in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 347-8). However this specific form is not yet attested and occurs here for the first time. The name *'bmlqrt* is known from a Punic inscription (Fuentes Estañol 1980: 58).



Fig. 20. Stele 14 *mlqrt'b*.

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are of medium size and written with sharp, thin lines. A date in the 8th c. B.C is suggested by the shape of the letter *mem:* it has an angular head consisting of three parallel vertical strokes and a straight vertical shaft. This letter finds close parallels in 8th c. inscriptions. The two most striking parallels are the 8th c. inscription of the Sidonian crater (Puech 1994) and a Tyrian seal published by Bordreuil (1986: No 7). This form of *mem* seems to be common to the Tyrian inscriptions of that period. An 8th c. date is corroborated by the shape of the letter *qof,* which has a rounded head divided into two by a vertical shaft, a shape attested between the 10th and the 8th c. B.C. Later, this letter changes drastically. *lamed* has an angular and short tail, a shape that cannot be later than the 6th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968:104-108). *Resh* has a triangular head and a long straight shaft. *Taw* has a cross-shaped head and a long vertical shaft, characteristic of 9th to 7th c. inscriptions (the above-mentioned Sidonian crater, the old Cypriot inscriptions from Kition and Limassol and the Kilamuwa inscription). *Aleph* has a very narrow angular head with lines joining at the left of a slightly tilted shaft, a shape common to 8th/7th c. inscriptions. *Beth* has a very angular head and there is a slight deviation between the vertical line of the head and that of the shaft, which curves at a right angle to the left. The palaeography suggests a date in the 8th c. B.C.

Stele 15 (Fig. 21)

This stele is cut in the hardest, most cemented variety of beach rock and is of a very pale brown color. It is rectangular in shape with a rounded top, very roughly hewn and in a good state of preservation. The front bears a horseshoe-shaped motif, its lower part crossed by a horizontal line. Very close parallels, which are interpreted as *betyls* (see below) are found on stelae from Nora (Bisi 1967: LII 2) and Sulcis (Bartoloni 1986: XXVI, 163) The *betyl* is a common motif on the archaic stelae from Carthage (Bartoloni 1976: 235, 237, 317).

Below the horizontal line there is an arrow-like sign with a rounded shaft. No satisfactory explanation can be given to this sign. However, the arrowhead may have been the result of erosion, and it is not impossible to assume that originally it was the head of the letter *beth*. Similarly isolated letters are attested on ostrich eggs (Amadasi-Guzzo 1988: 453) and on some Carthaginian stelae. Above the symbol, four letters are written in one line and the inscription reads clearly:

grgš

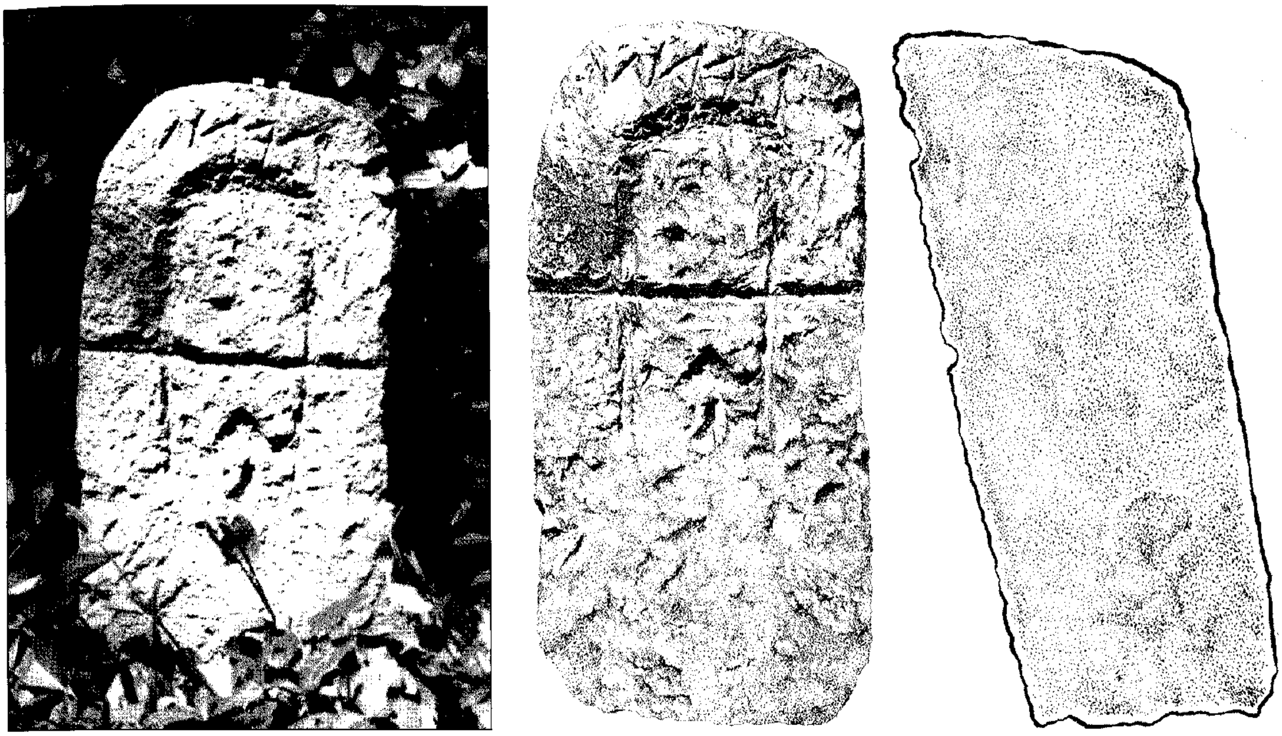


Fig. 21. Stele 15 *grgš*.

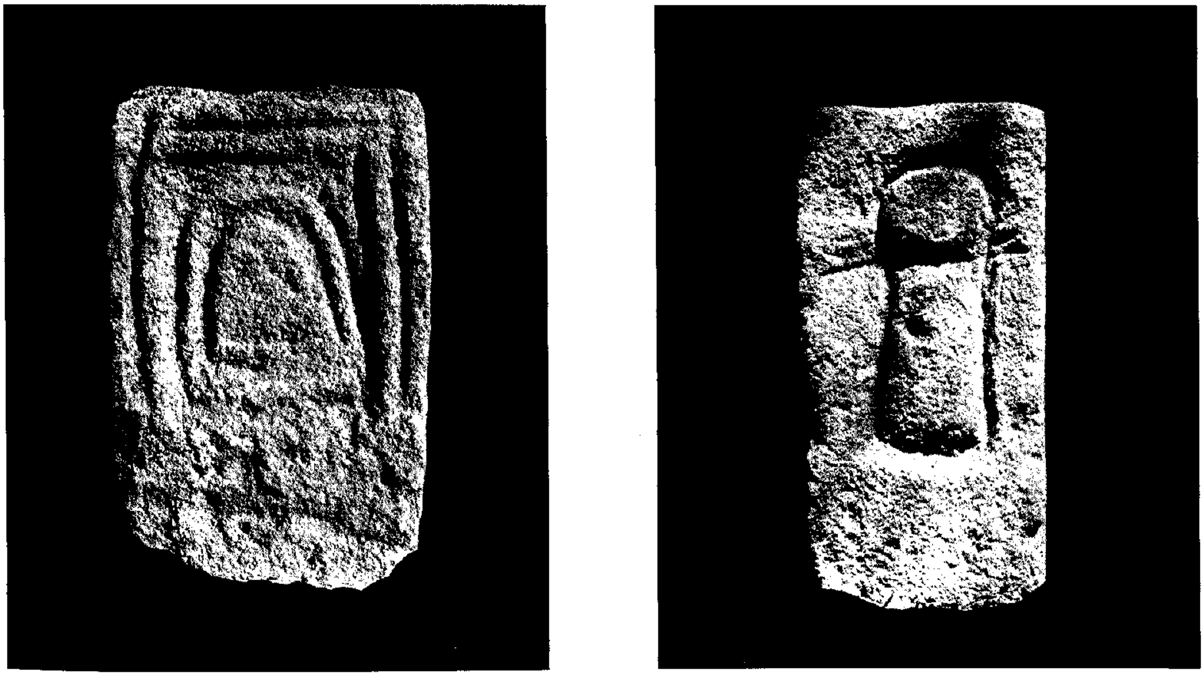


Fig. 22. Parallels to Stele 15 from Nora and Carthage (Bisi 1967: LII, 2 and XII, 1).

This personal name is known in Ugaritic (Ribichini and Xella 1991: 161) and is widely attested in Punic onomastics (Halff 1963-4: 105; Benz 1972: 299). Its meaning, however, remains uncertain. Halff (1963-4: 105) suggests «clay, mud» derived from Arabic *girgis,* and, according to her, the name could be that of a profession. An alternative explanation may be to interpret it as a theophorous name formed with the element *gr* = client (compare Heltzer (1987: 309) who suggests the meaning «protected person») and a divine name, *gš* = *Gusi* (for *Gusi* as a divine name see Liverani 1961: 185 and Vattioni 1966: 39ff.), according to a pattern very common to Phoenician and Punic onomastics (*gr'štrt, grmlqrt*; see Benz 1972: 298). New evidence from Ebla (*ARET* IX: 37, VI, 4; 38r: III, 3; 40: III, 7) and Ugarit (Ribichini and Xella 1991:161) attesting respectively the existence of a god *gú-sa, gs/š* as well as the Ugaritic personal names *bngš* and *grgs/š* shows that Liverani was correct in his assumption that *Gusi* is a divine name.

Concerning the palaeography, the letters are of medium size and written with sharp, thin lines. The two *gimmels* have straight vertical right sides and rather long left sides joining at a broad angle. It is difficult to compare and date these letters because *gimmel* did not undergo significant changes. The two oblique lines of the head of *resh* do not meet. This letter is of no help in dating the inscription while *šin* clearly is: it has a W-shape, which suggests that this stele cannot be dated later than the 7th c. B.C.

I.4.d_2 TYRE 1991 Stelae in the Department of Antiquities Collection in the Beiteddin Museum

Stele 16 (Fig. 23)

This rectangular stele is cut in a well-cemented beach-rock. It is one of the largest stones found in the Tyrian cemetery and it is in a good state of preservation. Traces of the stonecutter tools are still visible on its face and sides, which were only roughly smoothed, while the back was left almost untouched.

One line of inscription is written on top of the stele. It consists of four very large, 8 to 14 cm long letters, which were very deeply chiseled in the stone. These four letters cover the whole width of the stele and they cle-



Fig. 23. Stele 16 *lšm'*.

arly read: *lšm'*: «(belonging) to *šm'*». This personal name is a hypocoristic of a theophorous name meaning «(DN) has heard». It is widely attested in West Semitic in general and in Phoenician and Punic onomastics in particular (Benz 1972: 421).

As for the palaeography, the shape of the letters is very archaic, particularly that of *šin* and *mem*. The first has a clear W shape while the second is written as a wavy vertical line. Both find their closest parallels in 10[th] c. B.C. inscriptions from Byblos (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1), which suggests the same date for the tombstone. This makes it the oldest funerary stele discovered to date.

Stele 17 (Fig. 24)

This stele is cut in well-cemented beach-rock and has a slightly trapezoidal shape. In order to reduce its heavy weight, modern tomb robbers cut it lengthwise from top to bottom reducing its thickness substantially. As usual, only the front side was well dressed to receive the inscription.

The very large, deeply cut signs were written in three irregular lines: *mem* and *qof* are 9 cm long, *resh* is 10 cm long, while *taw* and the cross-line of *aleph* are respectively 14 and 12 cm long. The signs are well preserved and read very clearly:

mlq
rt'
b

Mlqrt'b, «(the god) Melqart is (my) father», a personal name also attested on Stele 14.

Concerning the palaeography, the form of the signs suggests a date in the 9[th] or early 8[th] c. B.C. *Mem* has a shaft strongly tilting to the right while its head is quite irregular. This corresponds to the transition phase from the vertical to the more horizontal shape of the sign's head, which finds its closest parallels in 9[th]/8[th] c. B.C. inscriptions like those of Nora and Kilamuwa. *Qof* still has a circular head divided into two by a vertical line, a shape that is not

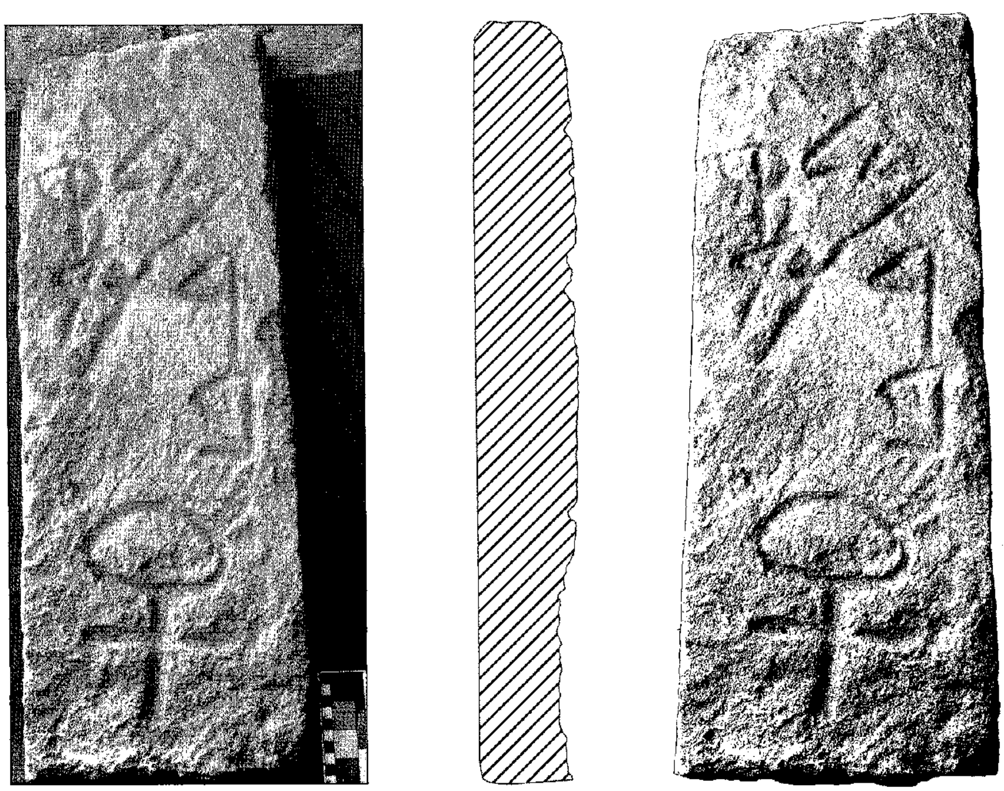


Fig. 24. Stele 17 *mlqrt'b*.

attested after the mid-8th c. B.C. *Taw* has also a form characteristic of the 9th/8th c. B.C. with its cross-shape and long shaft tilted to the right. The headlines of *aleph* join at a narrow angle left of the very long cross line, a form very similar to that found in the late 9th c. Kilamuwa inscription (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). The vertical shape and the angular head of *resh* as well as the triangular head of *beth* and its short tail turning at a right angle also find parallels in 9th/8th c. inscriptions.

Below the inscription to the left is a so-called *ankh* sign. The circular, or rather oval head is 13 cm in diameter while the vertical line below it is 12 cm long. The latter is cut at a right angle by a 15 cm long horizontal line, a few centimeters below the head. This sign is the most common symbol found on funerary stelae and is interpreted as a symbol for eternal life (see Chapter III).

Stele 18 (Fig. 25)

This stele is cut in a well-cemented beach rock. Modern tomb robbers sawed it in order to thin and to shorten it. What is left is a truncated stele with a rounded top. The surface of the stone was very roughly smoothed leaving the front side of the stele slightly irregular.

Three lines of inscription were carved a few centimeters below the upper edge. The letters are fairly large and very deeply cut. The first line of inscription is not perfectly horizontal and the last two letters are lower than the first three. The second and third lines are more regular. Except for the fourth sign, which is somehow problematic, the remaining letters are very clear and the name reads:

ʿlt⌊y⌉m
m bt g
mr
«*ʿlt⌊y⌉mm* daughter of *gmr*».

What is striking about this inscription is the consistency in writing the same letter. *Mem*, for example, is written three times almost identically. Its shape is very characteristic and consists of a shaft, slightly tilted to the right in two cases and vertical in one, and a head formed of two and not three vertical and parallel strokes, since the shaft does not cross the horizontal line of the head as is the case in later 6th/ 5th c. B.C. inscriptions. In these later inscriptions, the middle stroke usually crosses the vertical line of the head. The form of the letter on our stele is quite

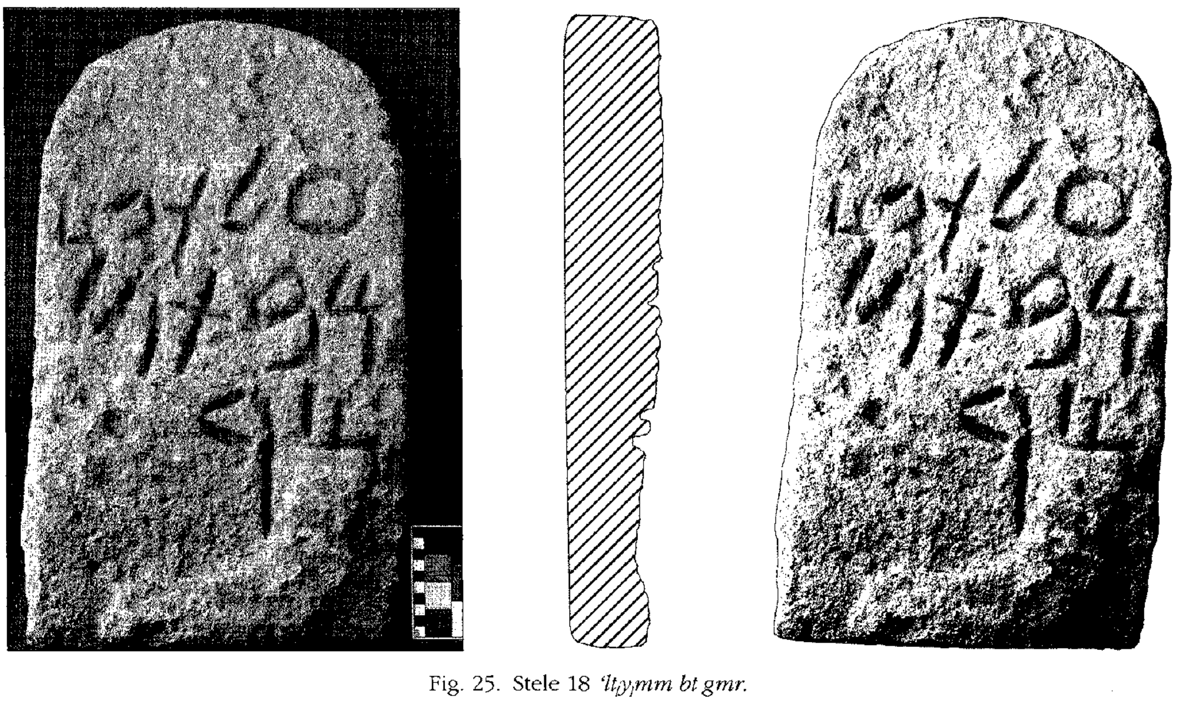


Fig. 25. Stele 18 *ʿlt⌊y⌉mm bt gmr.*

unusual and a close but not identical parallel is the sign *mem* in a 7th c. Maltese inscription (Peckham 1968: 107, 3). It differs from earlier 8th/7th c. B.C. signs in that the head is quite orthogonal and not wavy, and from later inscriptions in that the middle vertical stroke of the head does not cross the horizontal line. Two identical *taws* are attested in this inscription and they are both cross-shaped with a long shaft tilting to the right, typical of 9th to 7th c. B.C. inscriptions (Peckham 1968: 104 and Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). *Lamed* with its rounded tail and *resh* with its triangular head and long vertical shaft are also typical of this period. The head of *beth* is not very angular and its tail is clearly rounded.

Only one sign, the fourth of the first line, is difficult to identify with certainty. A close examination of the inscription allowed us to identify it beyond serious doubt as *yod*. The problem with this letter is that its upper part is very deeply cut while its lower part is hardly visible. The head of *yod*, made of two horizontal, parallel strokes and the vertical line joining them, is clear while the lower part of the sign as well as its tail are not well engraved. The lower part of the sign is shifted to the left. The fact that *yod* is still almost vertical, tilting only slightly to the left, indicates a date in the 7th c. B.C. as supported by parallels from Hasan Beyli and Praeneste (Peckham 1968: 105). All the above-mentioned parallels suggest a date in the late 8th or early 7th c. B.C. for the stele.

The personal name *ʿltymm* is attested here for the first time. *ʿlt* derives from a root *ʿly* "to go up" or "to be offered" (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 211). It is also a feminine substantive attested in Phoenician and used as a preposition meaning "on top of" or "above", "towards", "for", or as the construct form of *ʿlh* which is attested in Palmyrene with the meaning "altar", and in Punic where it means "burnt offering" (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 215 and 211). *Ymm* is a plural form of *ym*, which means either "sea" or "day" (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 107-108). A plural *ymm* "days" is attested in Phoenician. The personal name could be interpreted in a variety of ways: "Offering of (or for) the Seas" or "Offering of (or for) the Days". *Gmr* derives from a verbal root meaning "to be complete". Theophorous names formed with this root, "(DN) is complete", i-e perfect, are very well attested in Hebrew but also in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 297)

Stele 19 (Fig. 26)

This stele is cut in a hard, well-cemented beach rock and its front side was smoothed to receive the inscription. Tomb robbers cut it both length- and widthwise leaving a small stone with a three-letter inscription. The top and the right side of the stone show breaks, which have slightly damaged the first sign.

The inscription reads very clearly *hdʾ*, a hypocoristic formed with the divine name *hd/hdd*, the ancient Semitic and later Aramaic weather-god. The palaeography of the inscription dates it to the 7th c. B.C. as attested by parallels of the same period. *he* has a vertical shaft and three parallel and almost horizontal strokes of different length, the top one being the shortest and the bottom one the longest. *Daleth* has an angular head and a short vertical shaft. *aleph* has cross lines converging to the left of the shaft, which is rotated in a counter clockwise direction to the left. These forms of the signs are very common in 7th c. B.C. inscriptions (Peckham 1968: 105-107).

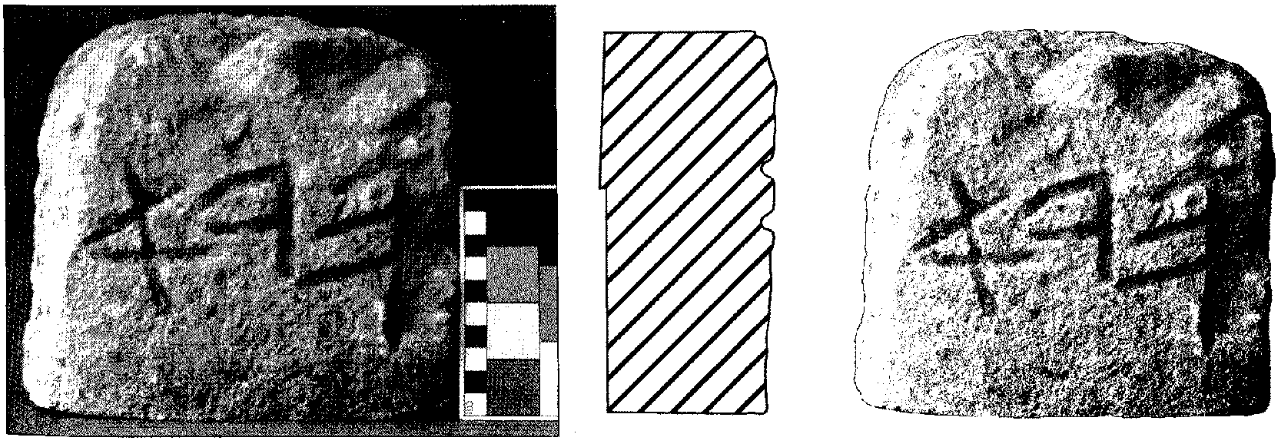


Fig. 26. Stele 19 *hdʾ*.

Stele 20 (Fig. 27)

This trapezoidal stele is cut in a hard, well-cemented beach rock, which was roughly smoothed on the front and sides while the back was coarsely hammered. Two breaks on the left and right lower corners can be seen. While the left break is very substantial and has partly destroyed the symbol, the right one did not cause any damage to the inscription.

The signs are of medium size and are deeply cut. They are written in four regular lines and they are very well preserved. The inscription reads:

lš
pṭb
n'z
r

«(Belonging) to *špṭ* son of *'zr*». Both personal names, which are short forms of well-known theophorous names, are widely attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics and mean «(DN) has judged or is judge» (Benz 1972: 423) and «(DN) has helped or is helper» (Benz 1972: 375) respectively.

The palaeography of the inscription is complex and presents some contradictory information. On the one hand, most of the signs seem to indicate a date in the 8th/7th c. B.C. The W form of *šin* and, most importantly, *ṭet* contribute significantly to this suggestion. *ṭet* is oval in shape, rotated to the right, with a cross bar drawn across the center. However, the fact that the oval is still completely closed suggests a date not later than the 8th c. B.C. *Lamed* with its rounded tail is another indicator of a date in the 8th/7th c. B.C. This dating is however contradicted by the relatively late form of *zayin,* which has acquired its zigzag shape after the 7th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968:105-109, Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). According to the evidence, and in spite of some archaic forms, a date towards the end of the 7th c. seems appropriate.

On the lower left side of the stele, below the inscription, is a symbol of which only a partly preserved circular head survives. Because of widely attested parallels, one could safely assume that it is a so-called *ankh* sign.

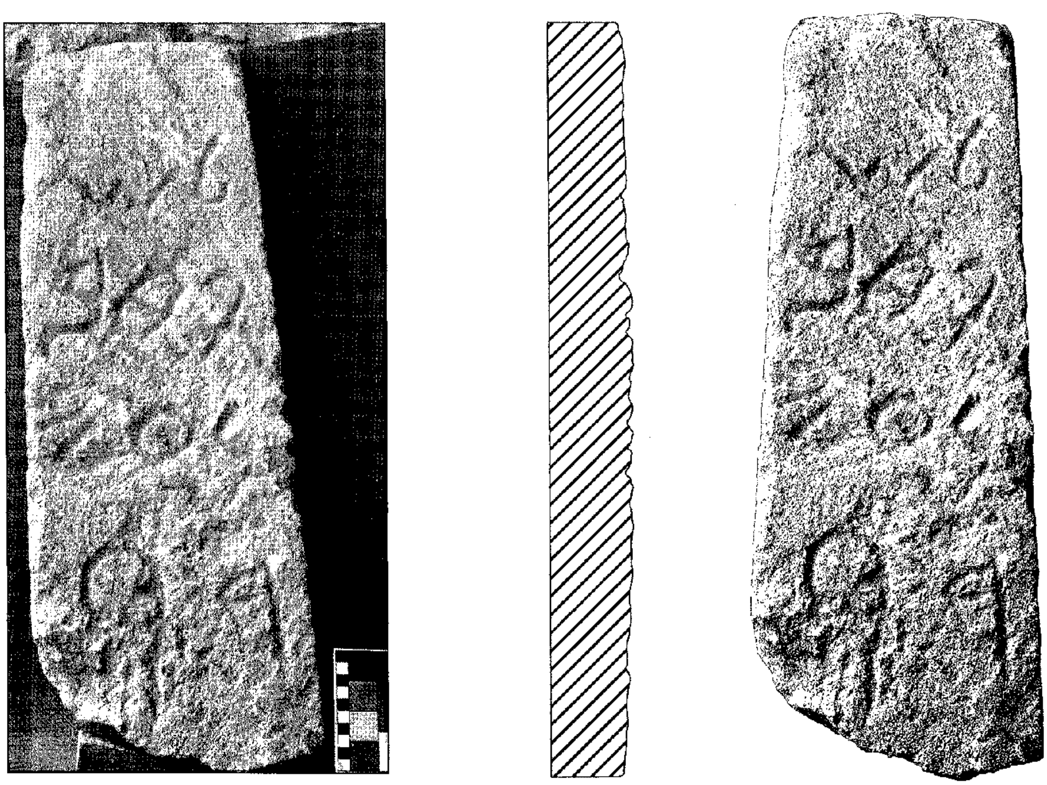


Fig. 27. Stele 20 *lšpṭ bn 'zr.*

Stele 21 (Fig. 28)

This stele was cut in a well-cemented beach rock. Clandestine diggers sawed it both lengthwise and widthwise, leaving only the rounded top of the stele and the three-line inscription. The stone was only roughly smoothed on the front, leaving an irregular surface. A probably modern break obliterated totally the upper part of the second sign and damaged partly that of the third. The rest of the inscription is well preserved and is written in three lines. It reads:

m⌞ṣ⌟ry
bn b'
lyṭb

The signs are deeply cut and of medium size except for *mem* which is larger than the other letters. The head of this sign consists of three vertical parallel strokes. The shaft was cut first as a short vertical line. It was lengthened by a second line, which is slightly shifted to the left as it clearly appears on the photograph. This form of the sign is attested on another Tyrian stele, stele 14, dated to the 8th c. B.C. Of the second sign, only the long vertical shaft is preserved. From its damaged head a short oblique line to the right of the shaft has survived. On the basis of this observation, a reading *ṣade* seems to be the only alternative possible. The next sign, in spite of being slightly obliterated, is easily recognizable as *resh*, with an angular head and a long vertical shaft. *Yod* is written twice in the inscription. The first one is rotated to the left. Its head has two parallel strokes and its tail is drawn upwards forming a narrow angle with the shaft. This slightly tilted form of the sign is characteristic of the 7th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968:107). The second one is very similar but more vertical in shape. *Beth* is written three times in an almost identical manner namely with an angular head and a tail that is drawn in an oblique line at the juncture of the head. *Nun* has a vertical head with two lines cutting each other at a right angle and a shaft slightly tilted to the right, a form typical of the 7th c. B.C. *Ayin* is made of two rounded strokes, which do not seem to meet, an indication of the relatively late date of the stone. *Lamed* has an oblique shaft strongly tilted to the right with a short horizontal tail, a form common to 7th c. B.C. inscriptions. Quite interesting is *ṭet* which is an oval rotated to the right with a cross pattern inside it attested in 8th c. B.C. inscriptions (Peckham 1968: 105, Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). The palaeography of the inscriptions suggests a date in the late 8th or early 7th c. B.C. for the stele.

The personal name *m⌞ṣ⌟ry*, a gentilic meaning «Egyptian», is attested in Phoenician onomastics (Benz 1972: 352-353) while *b'lyṭb* «Baal was agreeable» appears here for the first time.

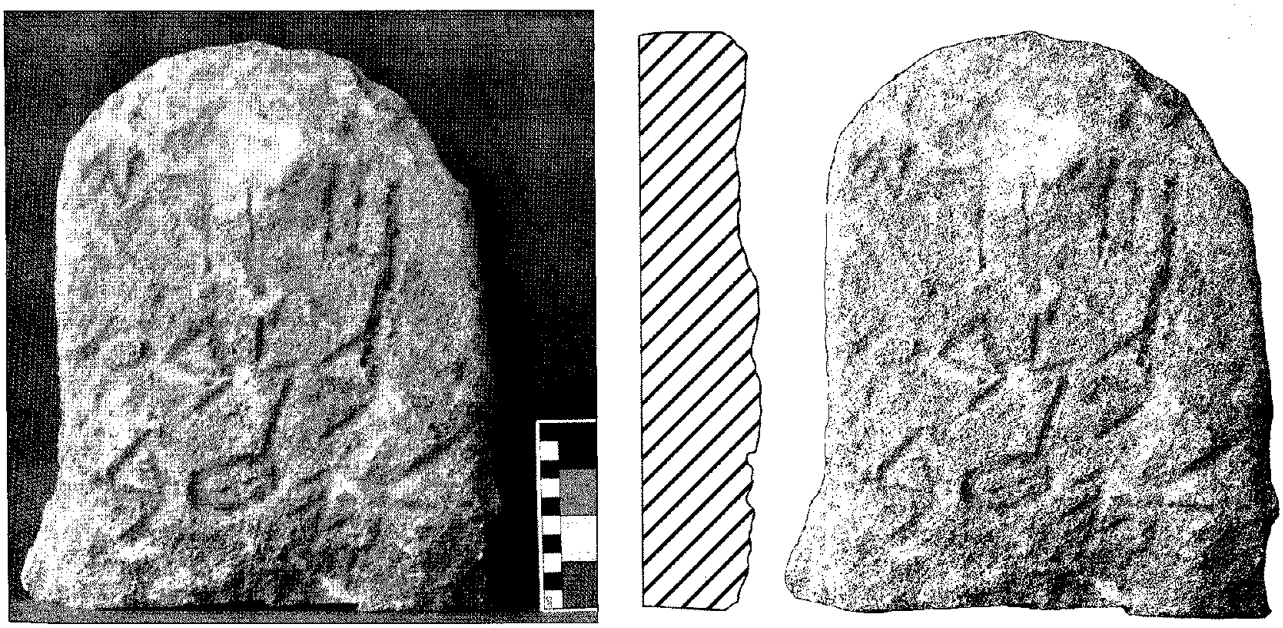


Fig. 28. Stele 21 *m⌞ṣ⌟ry bn b'lyṭb*.

Stele 22 (Fig. 29)

This stele is cut in a hard, well-cemented beach rock. It was only roughly smoothed on the front side and many irregularities can still be seen. Clandestine diggers sawed it length- and widthwise leaving only the one-line inscription. The breaks, which are visible on the right side of the stele, seem to suggest that the beginning of the inscription may have been damaged in the process. The signs, except for the last one, which is clearly a *ḥet*, are very badly preserved and difficult to read. All that can be seen are vertical and oblique strokes, which cannot be ascribed to specific signs. According to both the space and the size of *ḥet*, it seems that two or even three signs should be restored.

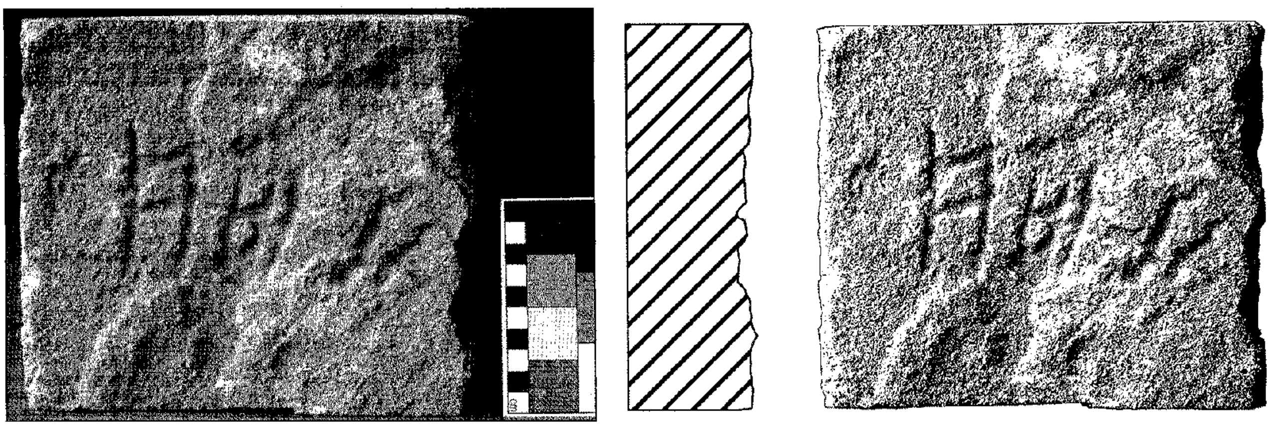


Fig. 29. Stele 22 [*xxx*]*ḥ*.

Stele 23 (Fig. 30)

This trapezoidal stele was cut in badly cemented beach rock and the stone shows signs of erosion. It was sawn by site looters both length- and widthwise leaving only the part where three lines of inscription are written. All sides were cut straight except the top of the stone, which seems to have been damaged by a break. The front side has been smoothed to receive the inscription.

The signs are deeply cut and of medium size but they have slightly suffered from erosion. They can however be clearly read:

ysp
’my
ḥ

The personal name *ysp*, «(DN) has added», is a hypocoristic attested in Punic onomastics as well as in Israelite personal names (Benz 1972: 323-324; for further parallels see Lemaire 2001: 9). If the remaining part of the inscription is to be interpreted, as is usually the case, as the family relationship of *ysp* to the other person mentioned in the inscription, the rest should be understood as *’m y’ḥ*, «mother of *y’ḥ*», a reading which makes perfect sense since the normal formula used on the stelae is «PN son, daughter, or wife of PN». The problem however with this interpretation is that in the above-mentioned examples *ysp* is clearly a male name while it appears on this stele as a female personal name. *ysp* is indeed clearly said to be the mother (*’m*) of *y’ḥ*. This is possible since *ysp* is the hypocoristic of a theophorous name such as *yspb‘l*, which could very well be interpreted also as a female name.

The second personal name is more problematic: first it is not attested in Phoenician or Punic; second, if *y’ḥ* is to be understood as a verbal form, the verbal root to which it belongs is highly problematic since no root *y’ḥ* is attested and no other weak root of which *y’ḥ* would be the imperfect form, is known to me.

The evidence provided by stele 31 (Lemaire 2001: No 1, stele 31) may suggest another and maybe better alternative for the interpretation of the inscription. Its inscription reads *mbry bn ysp bn ’my’ḥ*. Here *ysp* is son of a person called *’my’ḥ*. This name was compared by Lemaire to the biblical name Ahi'am and to another archaic Phoeni-

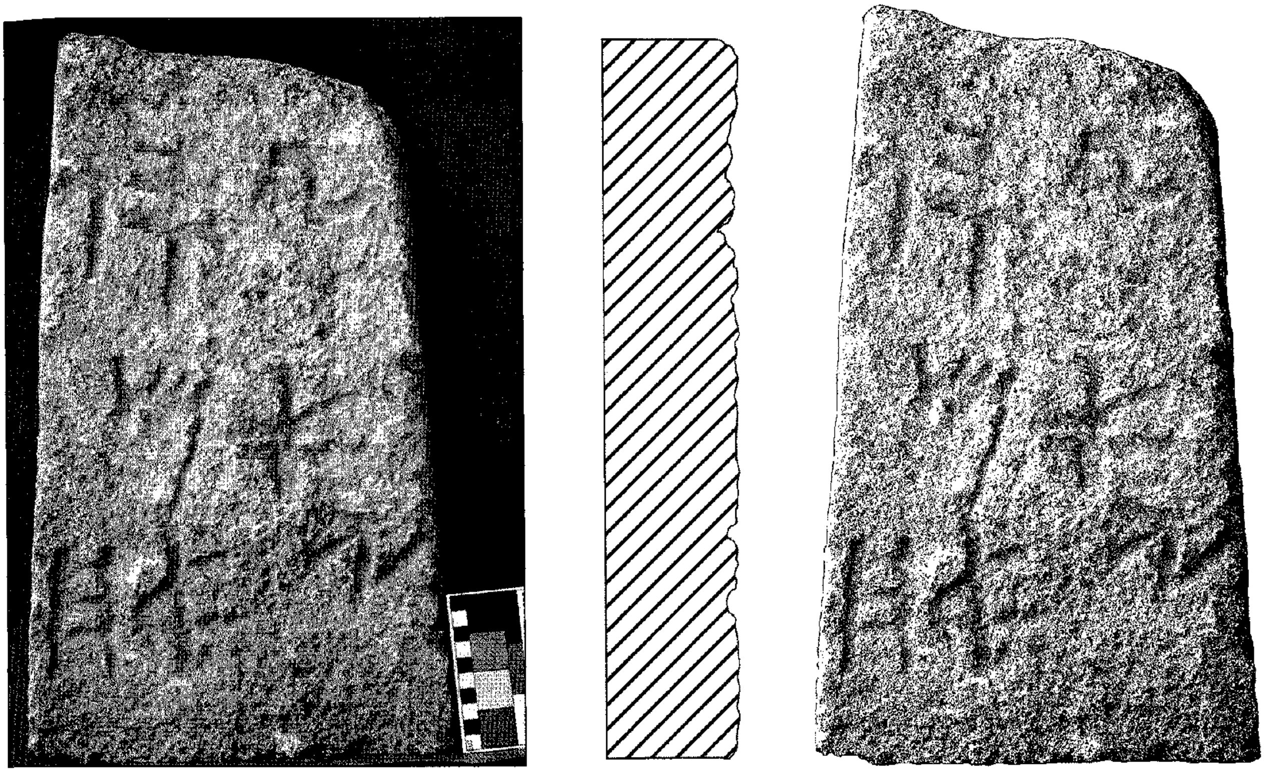


Fig. 30. Stele 23 *ysp 'm y'ḥ*.

cian name 'Ḷ 'M (Lemaire 2002: 9). We would like to suggest that *ysp* of stele 31 is the same as *ysp* of stele 23. On both stelae, the name of the father is the same, *'my'ḥ,* but on stele 23, the scribe has omitted the word *bn,* which may mislead to interpreting the signs following *ysp* as representing two separate words: *'m*, «mother of» and *y'ḥ,* a second personal name. If this alternative, which is highly plausible, is accepted, we would be in the presence of two deceased, father and son, buried in the same cemetery: the father, *ysp*, and his son, *mbry*, whose tombstones stood probably side by side before clandestine diggers separated them. The palaeography of the stelae brings further support to this suggestion: stele 23, that of *ysp*, is indeed older than stele 31, that of his son *mbry* (see below).

Concerning the palaeography, *yod* is written twice. The first sign is characterized by its angular and vertical shape, its slightly oblique tail, and by the parallel strokes of the head, a shape characteristic of 8th c. B.C. inscriptions. The second has a tail strongly curving upwards and an oblique lower line of the head, indicating a slightly later date, in the 8th /7th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968: 105-107). *Samekh* allows a closer dating of the inscription since its vertical shaft cuts the three horizontal lines of the head, a feature that is not attested after the 8th c. B.C. (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). *Pe* has an angular head and a vertical shape, and *mem* has a shaft slightly rotated to the right and a wavy line for the head. This shape is again common in the 8th c. As for *aleph*, the lines of the head converge and meet to the left of the slightly rotated cross line. Finally *ḥet* with its vertical parallel shafts and its perfectly horizontal cross lines finds its closest parallel in the Limassol inscription (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). The palaeographic evidence indicates that the stele should be dated to the late 8th c. B.C.

Stele 24 (Fig. 31)

This stele was cut in a badly cemented beach rock. Clandestine diggers sawed it length- and widthwise leaving only the part bearing the inscription and the symbol. The inscription is written in four lines, two above and two below the symbol. The weathering of the stone partly damaged the signs and made their reading difficult. The letters are fairly large in size, *ca* 9 cm long, and they are deeply cut. The first sign is partly obliterated but it is still clearly iden-

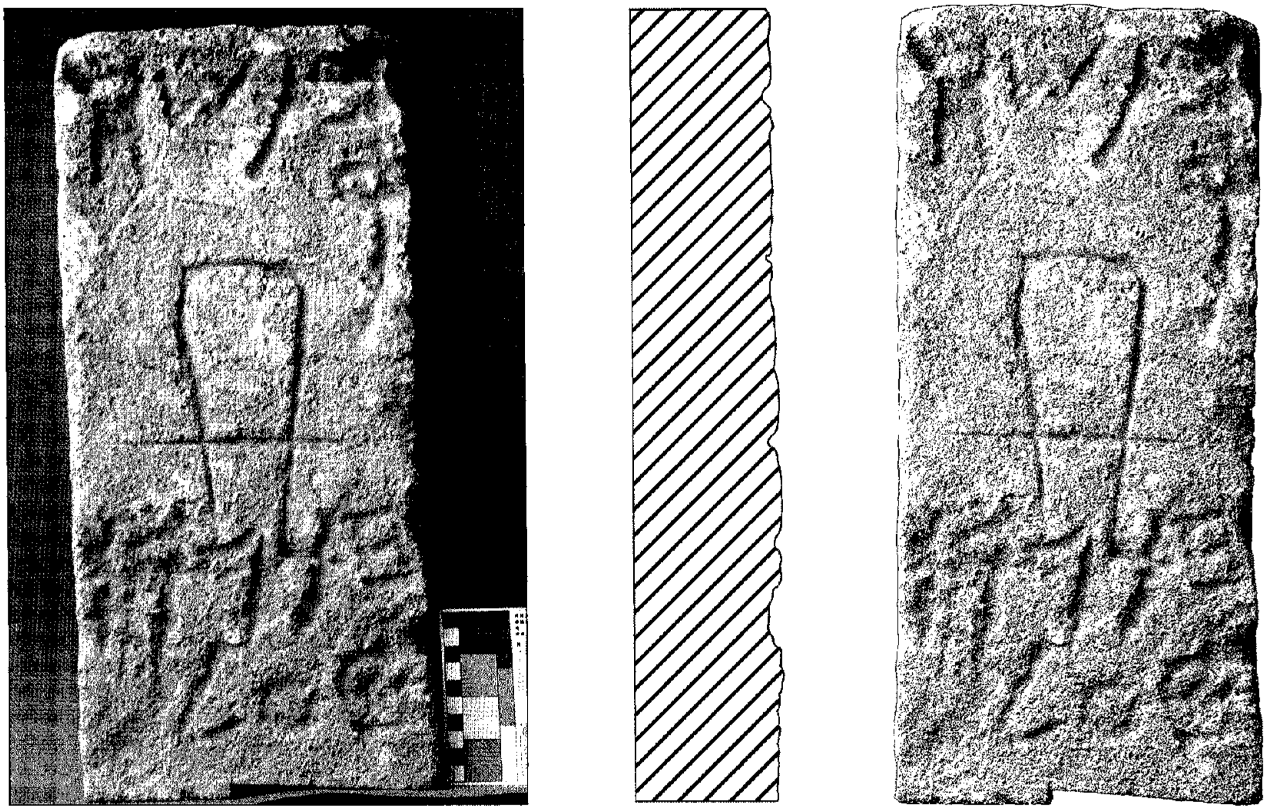


Fig. 31. Stele 24 *bt šḥr bt grtbʿl.*

tifiable as *beth*. The tracing of the head is not very distinct but the shaft is vertical and short while the tail curves at a right angle. The second sign is clearly *taw*: its vertical shaft is more deeply cut than the horizontal cross line and it is slightly rotated to the right. The third sign is well preserved: it is clearly a W-shaped *šin*. The upper part of the fourth sign is obliterated by a break, but the two parallel vertical shafts and two horizontal cross lines suggest beyond any doubt a reading *ḥet*. The only sign of the second line is clearly *resh*.

The first and second signs of the third line are clearly *beth* and *taw* respectively. The third one is more problematic because of the stone erosion. However one can clearly see a vertical shaft slightly rotated to the right and a short oblique stroke to the left of it, which converges to the top of the shaft but does not join it. It can be read beyond serious doubt as *gimmel*. The fourth sign is clearly *resh* but the fifth one is problematic. The erosion has obliterated most of it. What remains is the lower part of a vertical shaft and a small vertical line belonging to its upper part. Both vertical lines are aligned. Crossing the upper short line at a right angle is a short horizontal line. The surviving traces allow the restitution of *taw*. The signs of the fourth line are legible with fair certainty in spite of the fact that the first one is slightly damaged: they read *bʿl*. The personal name on the stele can be read with fair certainty as:

btšḥ
r
btgrt
bʿl
btšḥr bt grtbʿl «*btšḥr daughter of grtbʿl*»

The personal name *btšḥr* means «Daughter of Dawn». *Šḥr* «Dawn» is attested as a divine component in Punic personal names (Benz 1972: 414-415), and is well known as a celestial deity from the Ugaritic myth of the «Birth of the Gracious Gods» (Wyatt 1998: 324 ff). This divine name is attested in Phoenician onomastics here for the first time (For a recent study see Lipinski 1995: 355 under *Shihar*, see also Chaper II.3). *grtbʿl* means «(Female) Client of

(the god) Baal». Theophorous names built with the term *gr*, feminine *grt*, and a divine name, are widely attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 298 and 300).

Concerning the palaeography, the signs, mainly the W-shaped *šin*, the cross-shaped *taw* and the parallel vertical and horizontal lines of *ḥet*, clearly indicate a date in the 8th or early 7th c. B.C. at the latest.

The symbol depicted on the stele is well centered and consists of a horizontal line cutting a horseshoe-shaped motif. The upper part of the symbol is wider than its lower part because the vertical sides converge slightly towards the bottom. This symbol is identical to that represented on stele 15 and may represent a *betyl* (see Chapter III).

Stele 25 (Fig. 32)

This stele is cut in a hard, well-cemented beach rock. Clandestine diggers sawed it length- and widthwise leaving only the part where symbol and inscription are found. The front side of the stele was smoothed but small modern breaks, mainly in the upper left side of the stone, have damaged it. This stele presents a unique feature not attested so far: it was entirely covered with red paint, traces of which can still be seen mainly on the disc motif as well as on the lower part of the stone. Both motif and inscription are badly preserved and difficult to reconstruct.

The motif consists of a circular cavity, which seems to be resting on a horizontal red line. There is however no sign of an incision for the line under the circular depression. The red paint, well preserved in this area, may be responsible for this impression. If the line were drawn on purpose under the disc we may be in the presence of a badly preserved *ankh* sign, very common on the stelae, or of a *shen*-ring sign meaning eternity or protection (Wilkinson 1992: 193). It may also simply be a symbol for the sun-disc represented by a circular cavity, which finds parallels on stele 1 and 5.

Below the motif is a two-line inscription, which is rather difficult to read because the signs are shallow, irregularly written, and slightly damaged. The first sign of the first line can be identified with fair certainty as *lamed*. Its

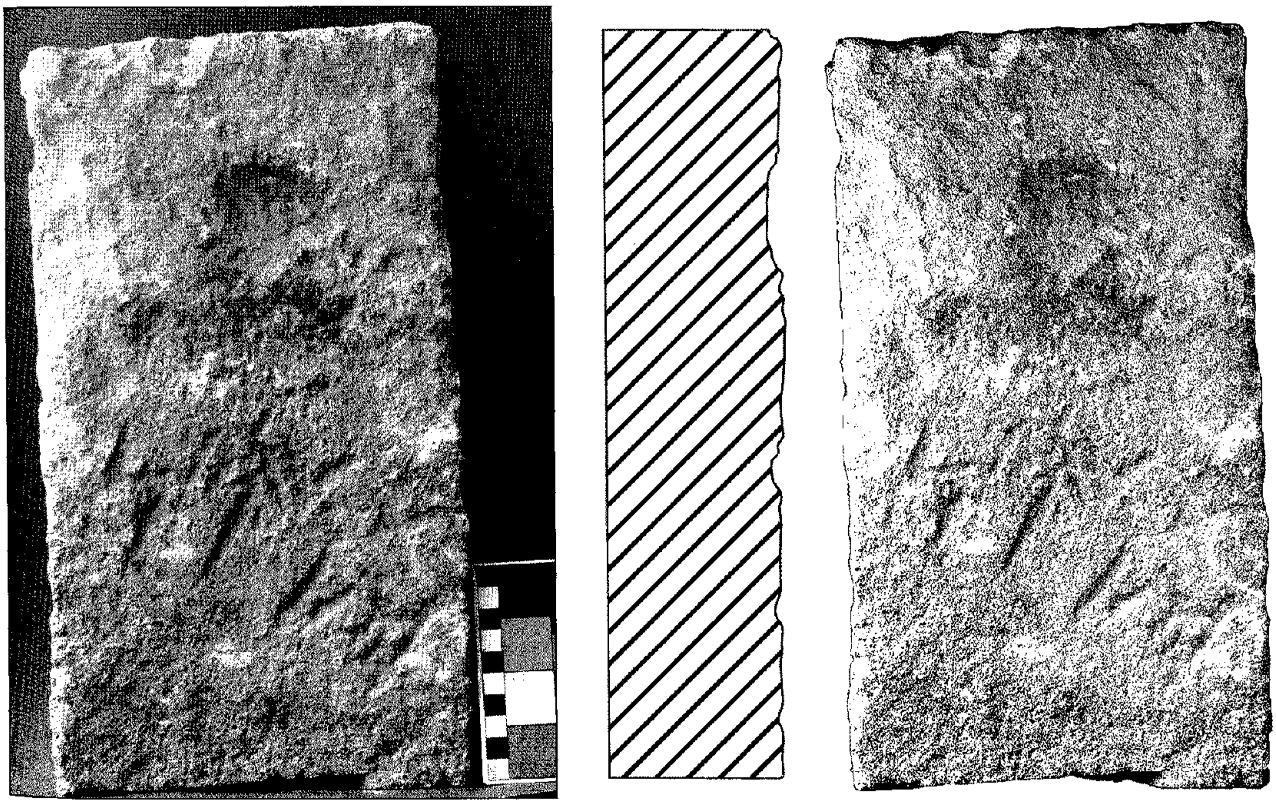


Fig. 32. Stele 25 *lšmny[l]?*

oblique shaft and almost horizontal tail can be clearly seen. The second sign is more difficult to identify: First, it is almost stuck to the next sign, and second, surface erosion has partly erased it. What can however be clearly seen are converging sides of a V-shaped sign, which do not meet. They strongly suggest a reading *šin*. This reading is made even more likely because of a faint oblique line parallel to the left stroke of V. The third sign is most certainly *mem* with a shaft tilted to the right and a head consisting of three parallel vertical strokes. The fourth sign, though partly damaged is most probably *nun*. The fact that an accidental stroke crosses the head of the sign may at first induce a wrong identification of the sign as *mem*. The first sign of the second line is also badly preserved. A careful observation showed that the traces could be those of *yod*. The sign is rotated to the left to an almost horizontal position with a short tail curving upwards. The second sign of the second line is also difficult. Only two incised oblique lines, one much shorter than the other, which converge but do not join, can be seen. They may be either accidental or they may belong to *lamed*. The first alternative seems more plausible since both strokes are higher than the sign *yod*. The suggested reading is thus:

lšmn
y[l]?

«(Belonging) to *šmnyl?* The personal name is built with the divine name Eshmun, a major Phoenician deity and city god of Sidon. It is written here without the prosthetic *aleph* as attested also on stele 8. If the inscription does stop after *yod*, we would be in the presence of a hypocoristic name *šmny* similar to *b'ly* on stele 6, which is well attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 94). But if the unclear strokes following *yod* are to be read as *lamed*, the second element of the name would read, *yl?* This element is very difficult to interpret first and foremost because the reading of the sign is highly questionable. It may be either a third masculine singular form of a weak verbal root or a noun, the identification of both of which escapes us.

Concerning the date of the inscription, the only solid clue is the horizontal form of *yod*, which finds a close parallel in the Ipsamboul inscription and suggests a date in the late 7th or 6th c. B.C. (Peckham 1968: 107).

Stele 26 (Fig. 33)

This stele is cut in a badly cemented beach rock and its front side is only very roughly smoothed. Clandestine diggers cut the heavy stone from all sides reducing it to the rectangle on which the symbol was carved. On the upper and lower part of the stone oblique strokes left by cutting tools can still be seen.

The symbol engraved on this stele is quite interesting. It is in fact a combination of several motifs: it consists of an 18 x 17cm deeply cut cross. In each of the four quadrants hence delimited, there is a symbol: In the upper two, there is a circular motif, 6 cm in diameter, and in the lower two, a 13 cm long *ankh* sign. The cross motif is found on other stelae, more especially stele 33, where it was incised on the head of a human figure, and some of the recently published Akhziv stelae (Cross 2002: No 2). Cross, *ankh* and disc symbols are attested separately on other stelae but the combination of all three appears on stele 26 for the first time.

Stele 27 (Fig. 34)

The stele was cut in a well-compacted beach rock. Only its upper part and sides were roughly smoothed while its back was left untouched. Its thickness was reduced in its lower part causing a concave depression on the front side. The sides are also very irregular. It is difficult to decide whether these irregularities on the front and sides of the stele were made in antiquity or by modern looters. Since the stone was not sawn like most of the others, it seems more likely that the thinning of its lower part occurred in the past in order to provide the stele with a sort of «foot» to plant it in the ground. This would explain the fact that the stone is more regular in its upper part, which was to be seen and so coarsely cut in the lower part, which was buried.

On the upper front side of the stele, a 22 cm long symbol is carved. It consists, like the one on stele 25, of a combination of different symbols: a cross, made of two unequally long perpendicular lines, a crescent moon, and a disc. The vertical line is cut at a height of 14 cm from its bottom by the horizontal one, and by a semi-circular, deeply cut, incision, 11 cm in diameter, with a circle carved in its middle. Above the semi-circular motif, the perpendicular line, slightly shifted to the right, continues *ca* 7 cm to reach the upper edge of the stone. Here again, the individual symbols are attested on other stelae but this motif combination appears on stele 27 for the first time.

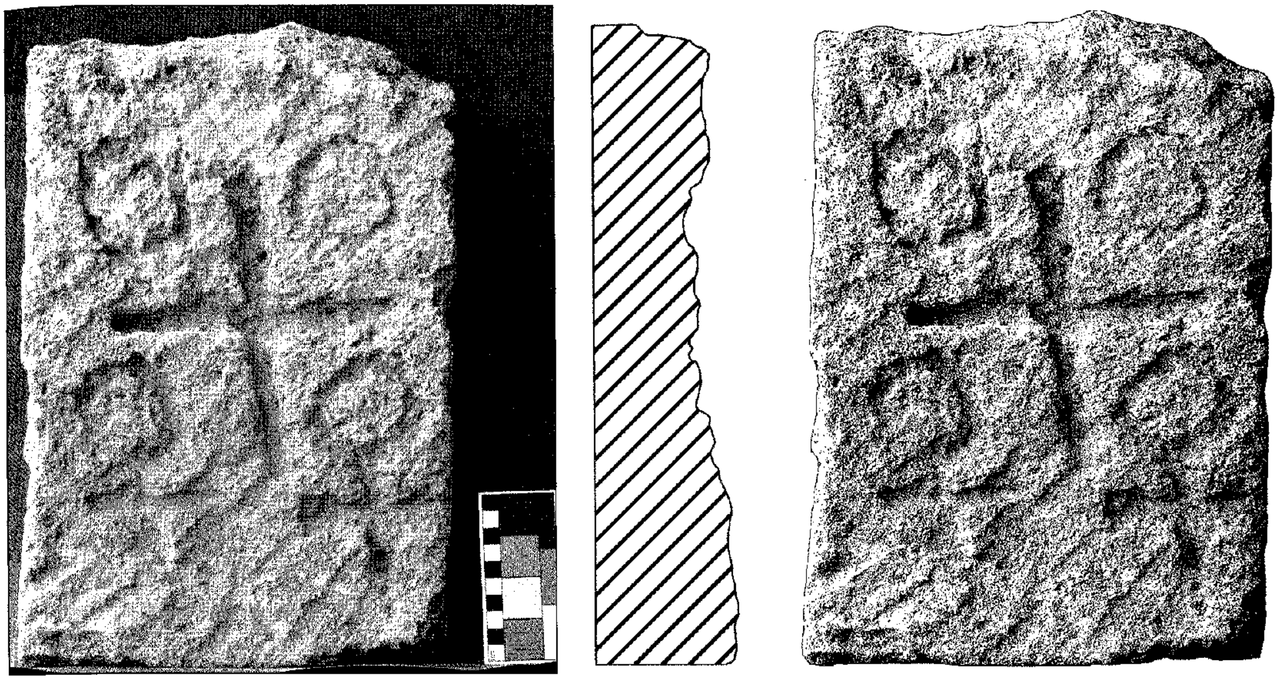


Fig. 33. Stele 26 Cross, circles, and *ankh* motifs.

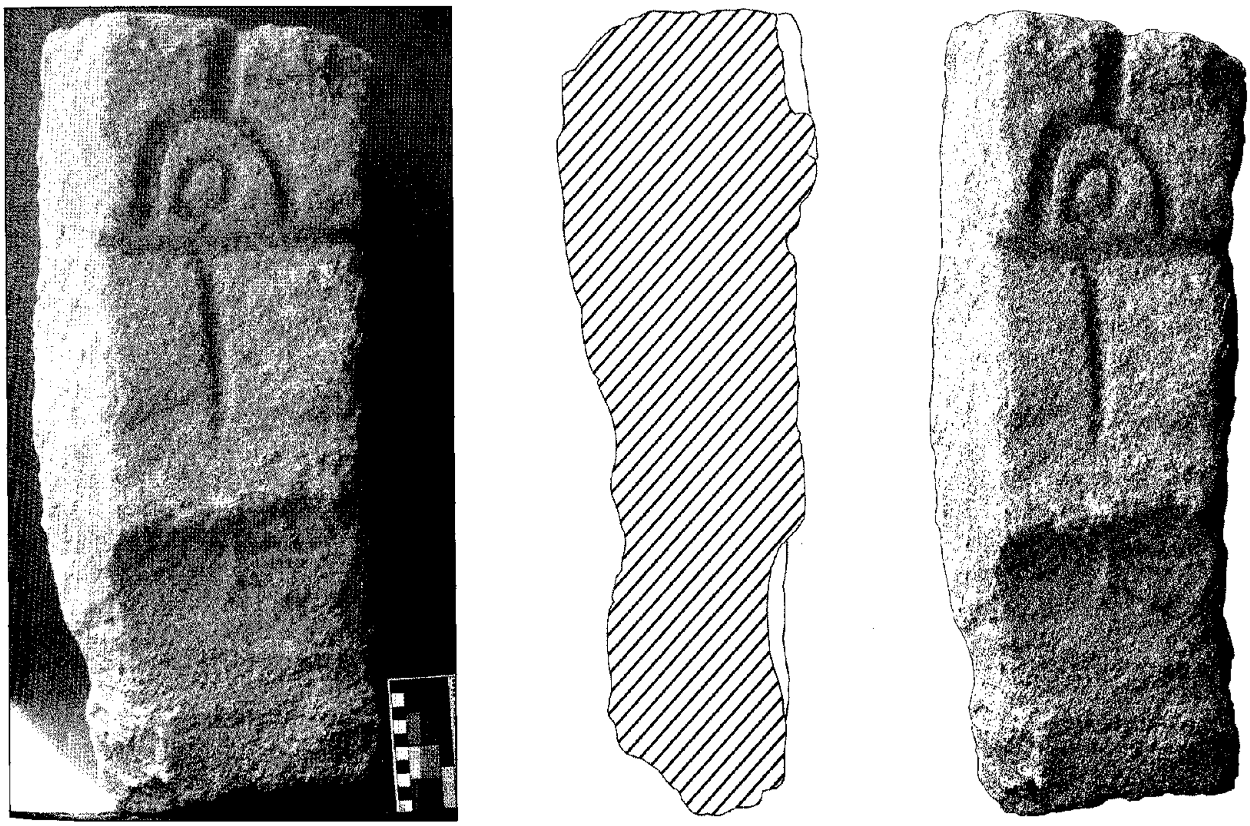


Fig. 34. Stele 27 Cross, crescent moon, and disc.

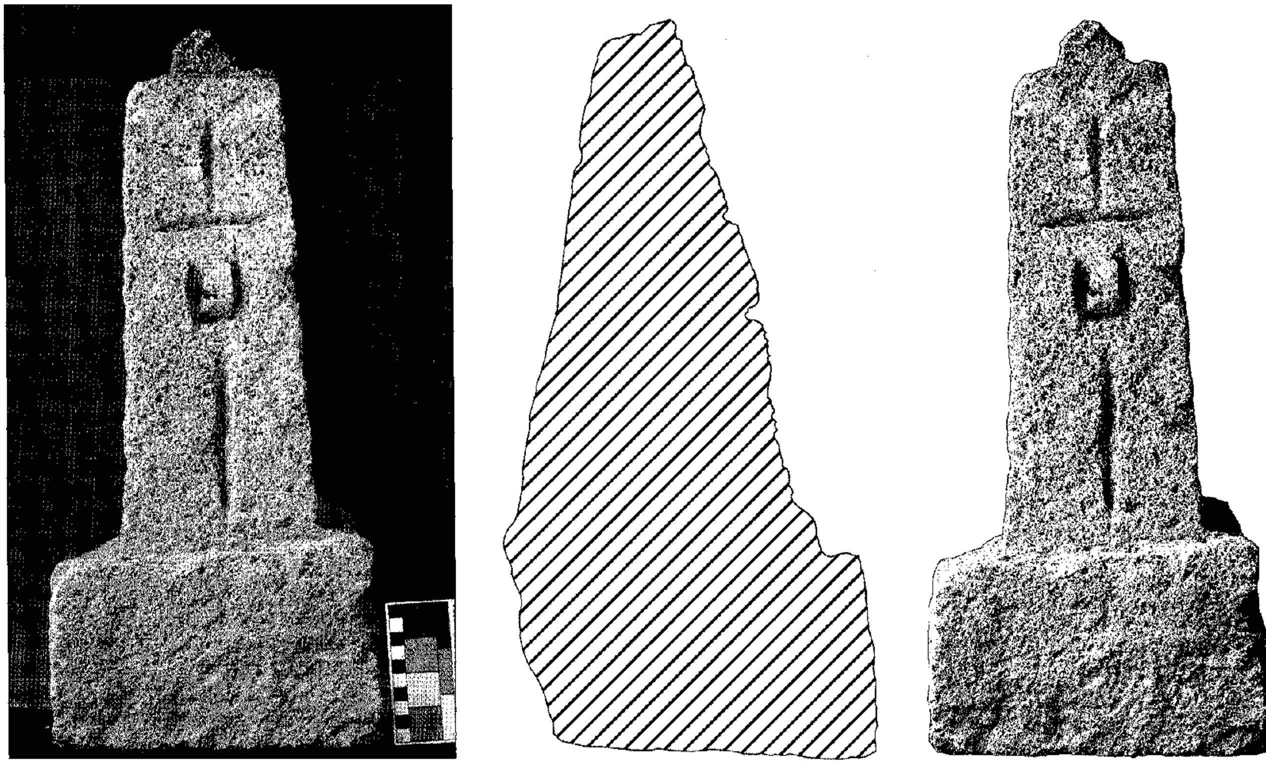


Fig. 35. Stele 28 Pyramidal stone with cross and U-shaped symbol.

Stele 28 (Fig. 35)

This stele is cut in a well-cemented beach rock. It is very carefully dressed and smoothed and its shape is quite exceptional: it consists of a 32 cm high pyramidal stone resting on a 22 x 22 cm square basis, both cut in a monolithic block. The slanting front side of the pyramidal stone has in the center of its upper edge a semi-cylindrical or rounded protuberance, 4 cm in diameter.

Pyramidal stones are attested in Phoenicia as early as the Middle Bronze Age. In Byblos where they appear in the Obelisk temple, they represent however cultic stones and not funerary stelae (Wagner 1980: 112). In Late Iron Age Phoenicia however pyramidal monuments like the Amrit *meghazils* are typical funerary monuments, which were borrowed from Egyptian funerary architecture (Wagner 1980: 169 ff). The pyramidal stele 28 is a modest imitation of these impressive monuments.

In the center of the stele, are two perpendicular lines of unequal length (28 x 8 cm). The engraved symbol has the shape of a long cross with a rounded, 5 cm long U-shaped motif in its middle. A U-shaped symbol, which is not quite similar, is found on a Carthaginian stele where it was interpreted as a tool (Brown 1986: Fig. 46, *g*). (For the interpretation of this symbol, see Chapter III). The long vertical line of the cross is interrupted by the U-shaped symbol. Two centimeters separate the latter from the 8 cm long crossbar. This line is joined at a right angle by the upper part (7 cm) of the vertical crossline.

Stele 29 (Fig. 36)

This stele is cut in a poorly cemented beach rock. It is intact but heavily eroded. Only the front and sides were roughly hewn and the surface of the stone is very irregular. Traces of the cutting tools are visible on the front and sides while the back was left untouched.

Starting from the upper edge of the stone, a deeply and irregularly cut U-shaped symbol was engraved on

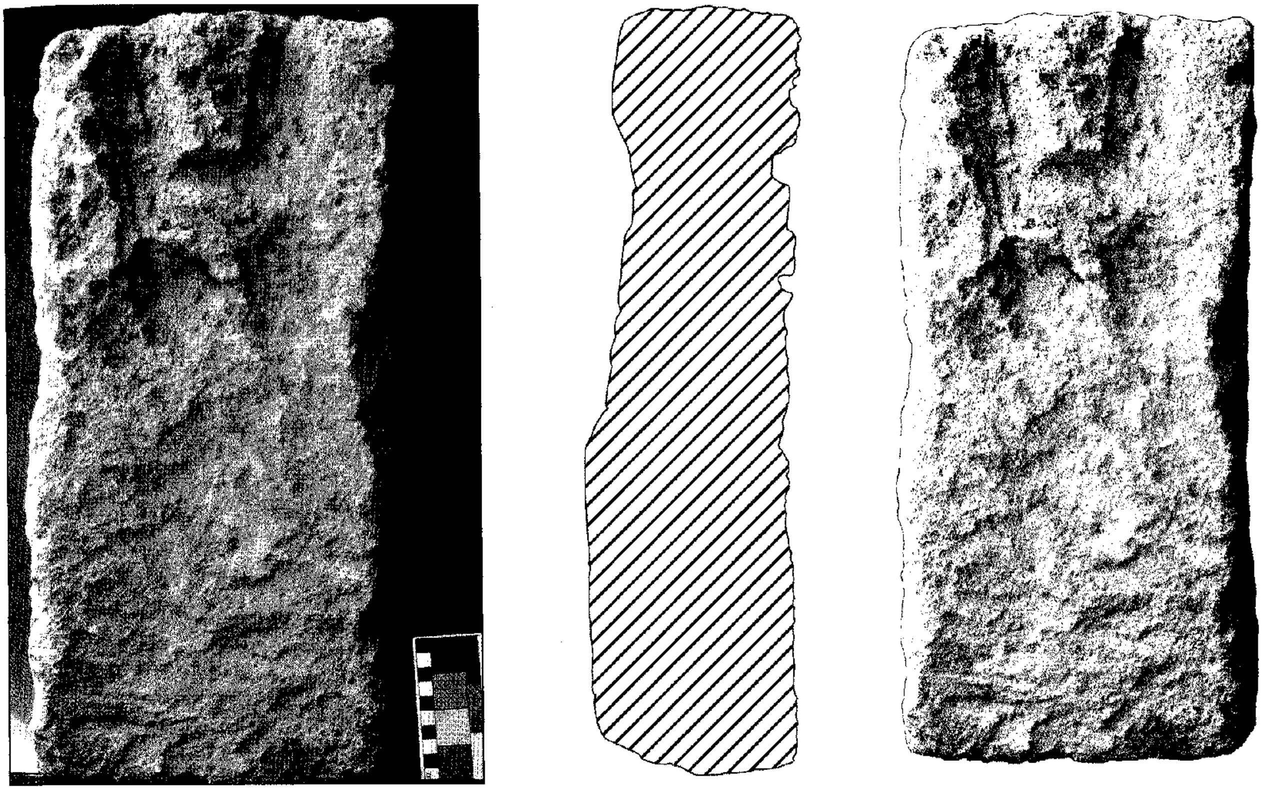


Fig. 36. Stele 29 U-shaped motif.

the upper part of the stele. The groove of this 18 cm-wide motif has produced a 9,5 x 7 cm rectangular protuberance in its middle.

Below the symbol are two circular depressions: they most probably resulted from the weathering of the stone. But if one compares them with that found on stele 36, they may be interpreted as remnants of an obliterated symbol. The overall impression of this stele is one of poor and hasty workmanship.

Stele 30 (Fig. 37)

This rectangular stele was cut in a poorly cemented beach rock. It is very coarsely dressed and its face and sides are very irregular. The lower part of the stone was left almost untouched and it is wider than the roughly smoothed upper part. The stele is very heavily eroded and the signs of the two-line inscription are barely visible. They are of medium size, coarsely written, and partly erased.

The inscription starts immediately below the upper edge of the stone. The first letter is clearly *aleph*: it has a rounded head and a vertical cross line: it finds its closest parallel in the 8th c. B.C. Karatepe inscription (Peckham 1968: 105). The second sign, *mem,* is larger than the others. It has a very long and slightly rounded shaft and a head made of three short, vertical strokes. It can also be dated to the 8th c. B.C. Of the third sign only the long vertical shaft is clearly visible. Although the shaft is too vertical for a *taw*, which is usually slightly rotated, this reading seems to be the most plausible: a faint horizontal short line crossing the shaft at a right angle can be seen. There are no other visible traces of lines near the top of the vertical shaft to allow another suggestion.

The first sign of the second line is clearly *samekh* with a vertical shaft cutting three horizontal and parallel strokes of decreasing length, a form characteristic of the 8th c. and very similar to *samekh* of stele 23. The second sign of the second line is clearly *pe* with a short oblique stroke for the head joining the vertical shaft at a narrow angle. A reading *gimmel* cannot however be ruled out. The last sign is *resh* with a rather short vertical shaft and a

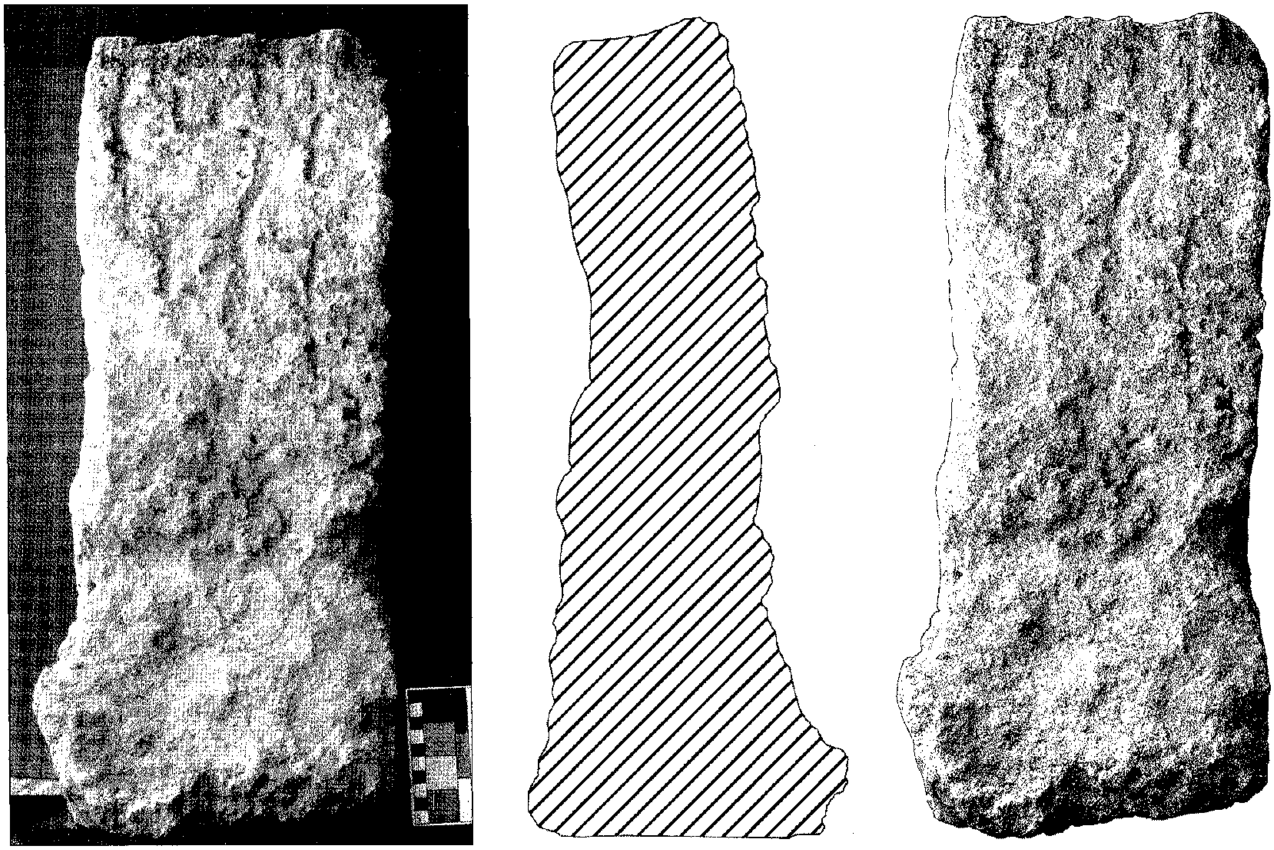


Fig. 37. Stele 30 *'mtspr.*

rounded head, again very similar to that of the Karatepe inscription. The palaeography suggests a date in the 8th c. B.C. for this stele.

The name of the deceased is *'mt spr.* Both components of the personal name are very well known: *'mt* is a construct form of *'mh,* slave, and *spr* means «scribe» (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 16 and 196). The personal name means: «Slave of the Scribe». This is somehow unusual for a personal name since names built with *'mh* are usually followed by a divine name and the person is slave of Baal, Eshmun or any other deity. The problem here is that the second component is a simple noun. There is, on the one hand, no evidence in Phoenician that the epithet or title «scribe» is attached to a specific deity and might replace it as a theophorous element in personal names, and on the other, no personal names with the element *spr* are attested so far in Phoenician and Punic onomastics. A less likely alternative may be to interpret *'mt spr* as the title or profession of the deceased. The absence of the article is grammatically correct since *'mtspr* is used here as an appellative or as a title (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: 150). If this alternative is accepted and the inscription refers to the slave of the scribe, the low social status of the deceased would account for the very coarse and poor workmanship of the stele.

I.4.d_3 TYRE Stelae in the Hecht Museum Collection

Stele 31 (H-3017) (Fig. 38)

Clandestine diggers left this stele intact. The photograph shows traces of the cutting tools on the front and small breaks on the right side of the stele. Like the inscription of stele 13, the first three letters are much larger than the rest. The irregularity of the signs was noted by Lemaire (2001: 8) who read the inscription *mbry bn ysp bn 'myḥ,*

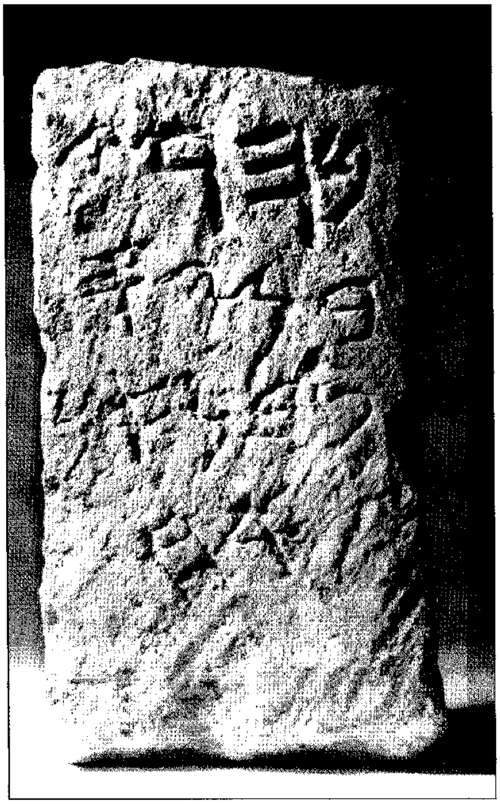


Fig. 38. Stele 31 *mbry bn ysp bn 'my'ḥ*.

«Maharay, son of Yasop, son of Immiah», and dated it to the second half of the 7th c. B.C. It is interesting to note that both the name of the father and of the grandfather are given which is exceptional in this type of funerary inscriptions. The names *ysp* and *'my'ḥ* appear on stele 23 and were dealt with there. As for the name *mbry*, it is a hypocoristic meaning «soldier/servant of (DN)» (Lemaire 2001: 9).

Stele 32 (H-3016) (Fig. 39)

The three-line inscription was read by Lemaire (2001: 10) *mṣbt mlk bn 'štrtg*, «Stele of Milk, son of 'Ashtartga». He interpreted the first name as a hypocoristic meaning «(god) is king» and the second as an abbreviation of *'štrtg[d]*, «Ashtart is (goddess of) Fortune». There is however an alternative interpretation for the first personal name: since Milk is known to be the divinized king, i-e a deity, it could be a hypocoristic of a name similar to those of Yehumilk and Yeḥimilk, kings of Byblos.

Lemaire dated the stele to *ca* 700 B.C. It is to be noted that this is so far the only Phoenician stele of pre-Hellenistic date from Lebanon that starts with the word *mṣbt*, stele. All other inscriptions mention the name of the deceased only. Two symbols are depicted: one above the inscription and one below it. On top is a small crescent moon facing upwards, a symbol, which is usually not attested alone on Phoenician stelae. Below the inscription is an *ankh* sign with an inverted V base. Inside the circular head of the *ankh*, there is a vertical line ending in a circle with four vertical strokes on its head. Lemaire (2001: 9) vaguely interpreted it as «a kind of flower». This symbol clearly represents a pomegranate, a fruit often used on Phoenician and Punic monuments (see Chapter III under III.2.e for parallels and interpretation)



Fig. 39. Stele 32 *mṣbt mlk bn 'štrtg.*

Stele 33 (H-3008) (Fig. 40)

The stele is highly eroded and very roughly smoothed. It has a rounded top and its back and bottom have been sawn leaving only the inscription, which was read by Lemaire (2001: 12-13) as *gr'šmn,* «client of (the god) Eshmun». It was dated on palaeographic grounds to the late 8th or early 7th c. B.C.

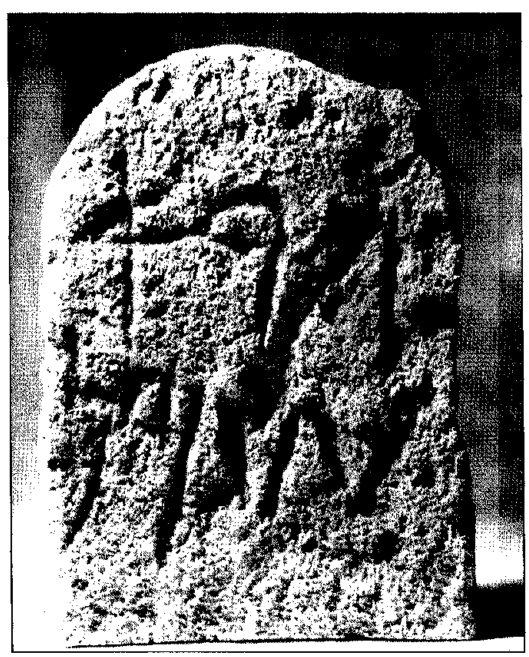


Fig. 40. Stele 33 *gr'šmn.*

Stele 34 (H-3005) (Fig. 41)

This stele was sawn by clandestine diggers who left only the inscription which was read by Lemaire *'mtmskr*, «She-servant of Maskir», the latter meaning «divine herald» (2001: 13 and additional bibliography; for Maskir see Chapter II). Lemaire dated it to the late 8th or early 7th c. B.C.

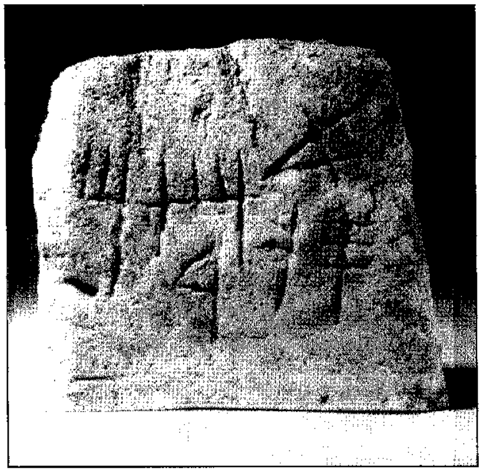


Fig. 41. Stele 34 *'mtmskr*.

Stele 35 (H-3011) (Fig. 42)

The stele was also sawn and only the part bearing the symbol and the inscription was left. The deeply cut U-shaped symbol is well attested in Tyrian iconography (see stele 28 and 29 and Chapter III.2.c). Above the symbol, there is a three-letter inscription, which was read by Lemaire (2001: 13-14) *hrb*, «the Master», a personal name attested in Punic onomastics. The stele was dated on palaeographic grounds to the 7th c. B.C.

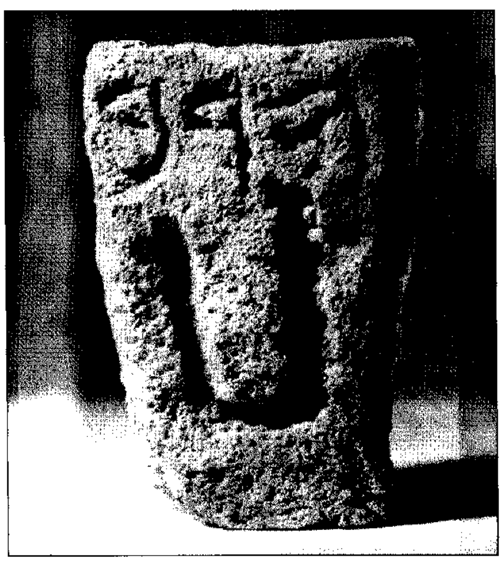


Fig. 42. Stele 35 *hrb*.

Stele 36 (H-3013) (Fig. 43)

This stele is cut in compacted sandstone. It was also sawn at the back and bottom leaving only the part where four letters were deeply cut. They read *l'mn*. Lemaire (2001: 14) interprets *l'mn* as a personal name built with the preposition *lamed* and the divine name Amon and meaning «(Belonging) to (the god) Amon». There remains of course the alternative to consider *lamed* a preposition *preceding* the name of the deceased, as is often the case on the Phoenician stelae. In this case the personal name Amon would be a hypocoristic name without suffix as often attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 232-233). The inscription is dated to *ca* 700 B.C.

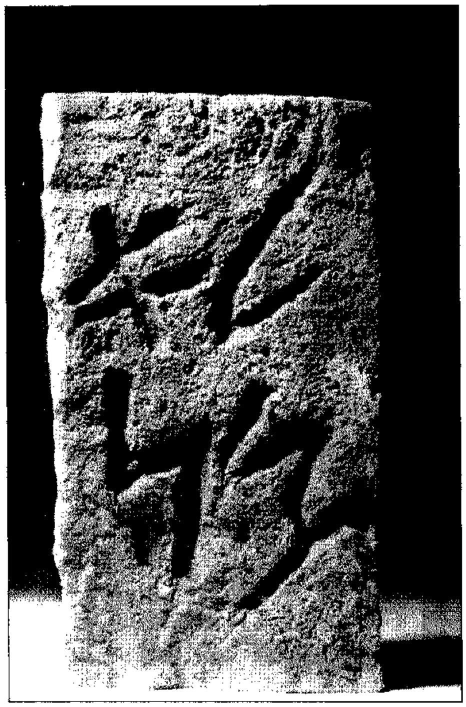


Fig. 43. Stele 36 *l'mn*.

Stele 37 (H-3015) (Fig. 44)

This pyramidal stone was also sawn length- and widthwise leaving only the part with the inscription. Lemaire (2001: 15) dated it to the late 7th c. B.C. and read it *tm''l*: «Tammâ (son of?) El?»

The first four letters of the inscription are deeply incised and clearly visible. The regular distance between the letters as well as the fact that they are all very clear casts some doubt about the possible existence of a fifth sign of which no traces can be seen. Irregularities due to the erosion of the stone might account for Lemaire's suggestion but his reading *lamed* remains highly hypothetical.

Concerning the meaning of the personal name, Lemaire obviously assumes, in spite of the omission of the word *bn*, the existence of two personal names, both hypocoristica: the first, *tm'*, means « (god) is perfect» and the second, *'l* means «god (is or does) something».

Another alternative may be suggested: Since a reading *lamed* is not convincing, the name of the deceased could be read *tm''*. There exists in Phoenician and Punic a noun *tm'* which is a title or profession meaning «chief, commander, ruler» (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 329). The personal name *tm''* may thus be interpreted as a hypocoristic meaning «DN is ruler». It may also mean «(DN) is Perfection» because *tm'* «perfection» is also attested (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 329).



Fig. 44. Stele 37 *tm''[l?]*.

Stele 38 (H-3014) (Fig. 45)

This stele belongs to the group of sawn stones. Only inscription and symbol were left. The inscription was read by Lemaire (2001: 16) *lgrt'*, «(Belonging) to Geratâ», interpreted as hypocoristic female personal name meaning «client of (DN)». It was dated to *ca* 700 B.C. The cross symbol below the inscription is well attested on the Tyrian stelae (26, 27, 28 and 46) as well as on a stele from Akhziv (Cross 2002: No 2).

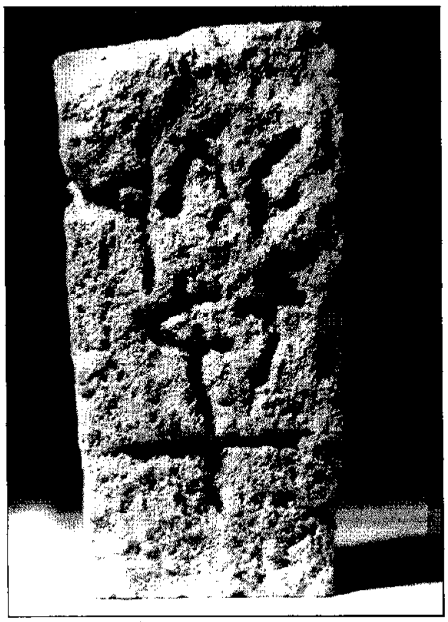


Fig. 45. Stele 38 *lgrt'*.

Stele 39 (H-3010) (Fig. 46)

This stele had originally a T-shape but was cut by clandestine diggers. Its inscription was read by Lemaire (2001: 17-18) *šbʿt bt ʿzbʿl*, «Shebaʿt daughter of ʿAzbaal». *šbʿt* means «abundance» and is attested on stele 13. Her father's name, *ʿzbʿl*, is very well attested in Phoenician onomastics. It means «(The god) Baal is (my) strength». The inscription dates the stele to *ca* 600 B.C.



Fig. 46. Stele 39 *šbʿt bt ʿzbʿl*.

Stele 40 (H-3009) (Fig. 47)

This stele was sawn and the part that was left bears an inscription which was read by Lemaire (2001: 18) *lmlk' bt pdn*, «(Belonging) to Milkâ daughter of Padôn». Lemaire interpreted *mlk'* as a female hypocoristic meaning «(DN) is king». *mlk'* could be also interpreted as a hypocoristic built with the divine name Milk, which is widely attested in Phoenician theophorous names (Benz 1972: 344-345). *pdn* is a hypocoristic and means «(the god) has redeemed». The palaeography of the inscription dates the stele to *ca* 600 B.C.



Fig. 47. Stele 40 *lmlk' bt pdn*.

Stele 41 (H-3007) (Fig. 48)

This stele, which is highly weathered, was also sawn. Its inscription was read by Lemaire (2001: 19-20) ***lklbt bt 'bskn***: «(Belonging) to Kalbat daughter of 'Absakkon». ***klbt*** means «she-dog/servant (of the god) and ***'bskn*** is a variant of ***'bdskn*** «servant of (the god) *skn*», a Phoenician god whose name, according to Lipinski (1995: 176) means *betyl* (see also Chapter II). The inscription was approximately dated to the late 7th c. B.C.

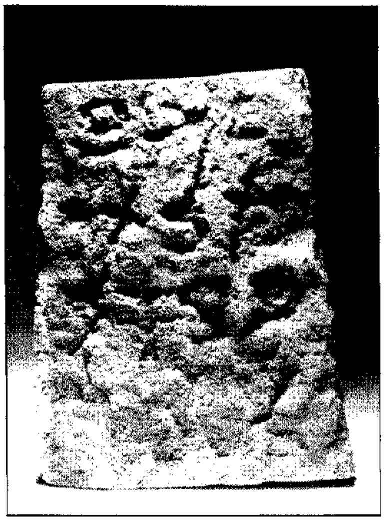


Fig. 48. Stele 41 *lklbt bt 'bskn*.

Stele 42 (H-3006) (Fig. 49)

This stele was also sawn. Its inscription was read by Lemaire (2001: 21) *'štrt 'sp* meaning «Ashtart has assembled». It was dated to the end of the 7th c. B.C. Below the inscription is a symbol representing a *pseudo-ankh* sign with an inverted V-shaped base also found on other Tyrian stelae



Fig. 49. Stele 42 *'štrt 'sp*.

I.4.d_4 TYRE Stelae from the 1997 excavations of the Tyre al-Bass cemetery

Stele 43 (Fig. 50)

Slightly trapezoidal stele cut in compact beach-rock. Its front side is smoothed while its back is roughly hammered. 8 cm below the upper, and 10 cm away from the lateral edges is an 18 cm long and 13 cm deep square niche. The figurine or offering, which was probably placed there, was not preserved. Another stele bearing a similar motive, stele 7, was also found in Tyre.

As already mentioned, stelae with a *naos* are attested in Byblos as early as the beginning of the second millennium B.C. and are also widespread in the western Phoenician colonies.

Stele 44 (Fig. 53)

Slightly trapezoidal in shape, this stele is cut in granulated beach-rock. Its front side has been smoothed while its backside has been only very roughly hammered. Two superimposed symbols fill the front surface: on top, a human head and, below, a *pseudo-ankh* sign, attested on other stelae (See Chapter III).

The head consists of an almost perfect circle 10 cm in diameter incised in the stone. In the center of the circle, two vertical, parallel, 6 cm long lines form the nose. They are linked together at their lower end by a deeply cut horizontal line (6 cm long x 3 cm wide) representing the mouth. Two 4 cm long, slightly oval holes, placed symmetrically on both sides of the nose lines, represent the eyes. A second smaller circle, 9 cm in diameter, cuts the first one below the mouth line and forms the head of a so-called *pseudo-ankh* sign. The *ankh* head and the horizontal line are joined together by a 3 cm vertical incision, located on the right side of the circle. This short line is either accidental or may have been added later to correct the mistake made by the stonecutter who drew the circle too far from the line. 3 cm below the *ankh* head is a 17 cm long horizontal line resting on two vertical, parallel, 10 cm long lines drawn from its middle.

The human head owes its juvenile aspect to the round shape of the face as well as to the absence of hair and ears. The naïve and almost childish aspect of this representation has no parallel on the Phoenician stelae of the motherland. This is in fact not surprising since the Tyrian cemetery, with the exception of that of Akhziv where one

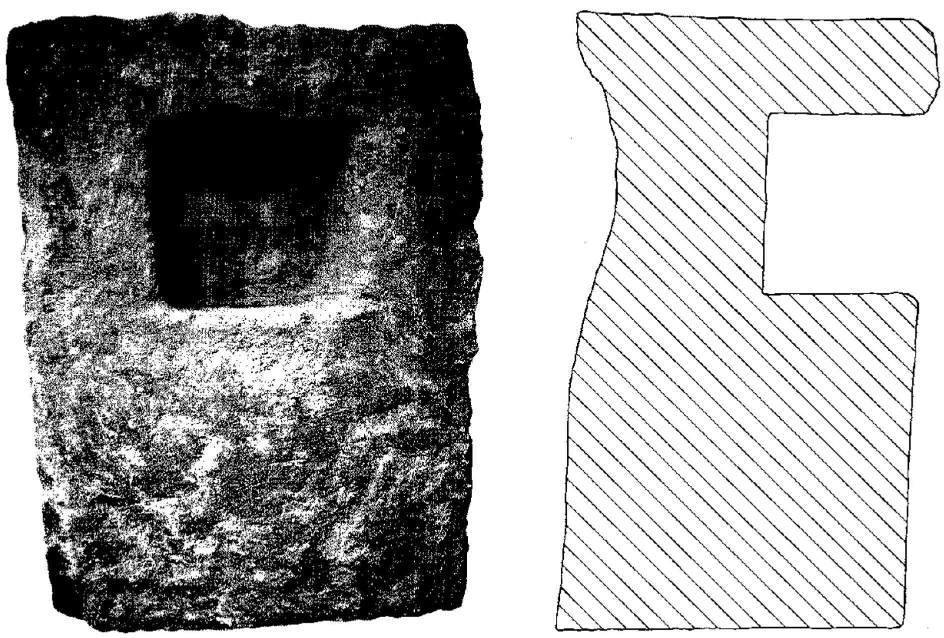


Fig. 50. Stele 43 Naos.

such stele was found (Cross 2002: No 6), is the first eastern Phoenician burial ground to have yielded stelae with human representations. One exception is the shrine model published by Bisi (1971) and dated to the 8[th] c. B.C. where a human figure, clearly representing a deity, is standing inside the shrine. Another example is the figurine of a goddess standing inside a shrine represented on a terracotta plaque from Helaliyye near Sidon (Gubel 1986: Fig. 10). This is the reason why, in spite of the chronological gap, we have to turn to the stelae found in the western Phoenician colonies for comparison.

Tusa (1982: 105) has already noted the existence of a large number of stelae representing human figures from Sicily and Sardinia while in Carthage symbols prevail. The most striking parallels to stele No 2 come from the area of Sassere in Sardinia. They are all very late and date to the Roman period, between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D. (Moscati 1995: 539). The majority of the human heads represented on these stelae, called '*a specchio*', consists of round faces incised exactly in the same way as the Tyrian example. Moscati's (1995: 534) description of the Sardinian stelae could easily apply to stele 44: *'il viso è circolare, spesso così esattamente da far pensare all'uso di uno strumento sul tipo del compasso...il naso è a bastoncello rettangolare, talora semplificato in due tratti verticali. Gli occhi sono realizzati abitualmente con due punti incisi...la bocca è un breve tratto orizzontale...*» The stelae production of this area, which is characterized by the use of incision, is also said to be «*rozza*» (Moscati 1995: 534). Another close parallel is in the Museum of Cagliari (Moscati-Uberti 1991b: Pl.8) and represents a person with a juvenile face whose incised big and round head is in sharp disproportion with the body represented as a small rectangle.

Two further examples from Monte Sirai (Bondì 1972: PlsV, 10 and Pl. XXXIV, 73) present the same face features, which confer to the representation a very primitive aspect.

Finally, stelae from Uras in Sardinia also provide good parallels (Bondì 1972: Pls. LVI and LVII and more recently Moscati-Uberti 1991a: 23-26). Garbini has noted the «*livello generalmente basso-notevolmente basso- del artegiano*» (1964: 66) and Bondì (1972: 74-75), pointed out the crude character of the Monte Sirai stelae, a characteristic that can also be applied to the Tyrian stelae. These parallels belong however to a completely different and local tradition, typical of Roman Sardinia.

Concerning the *ankh* sign, its particular feature are the two, instead of one, vertical lines below the horizontal one as is usually the case on Phoenician stelae (Delavault-Lemaire 1979: III, 5; Cross 2002: No 4; stelae 6, 26, 42) and on seals and scarabs from roughly the same period (Bordreuil 1986: Nos 1, 6,17, 18, 65, 86, 94). The same *pseudo-ankh* shape is however largely attested on Phoenician weights from the antiquities market, which are said to come from the Syro-Lebanese coast (Elayi, A. and Elayi, J. 1997: Nos 165, 166, 168, 296, 287, 291, 298, 309, 311, 315, 316, 338, 346, 368, 437). The same feature is also attested on a clay figurine from Aya Irini dated to the sixth



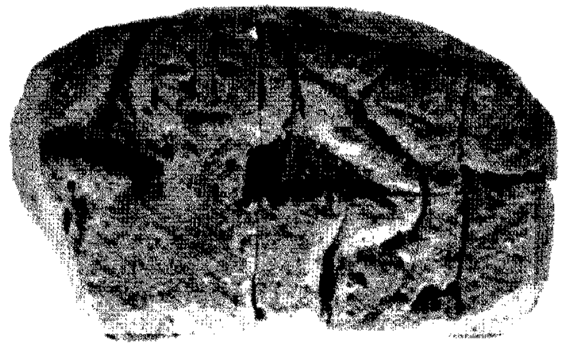


Fig. 51. Parallels to Stele 44 in the Museum of Cagliari (Moscati-Uberti 1991 b) and Monte Sirai (Bondi 1972).



Fig. 52. A parallel to the *ankh* sign on stele 44 from Aya Irini (Beers 1991).

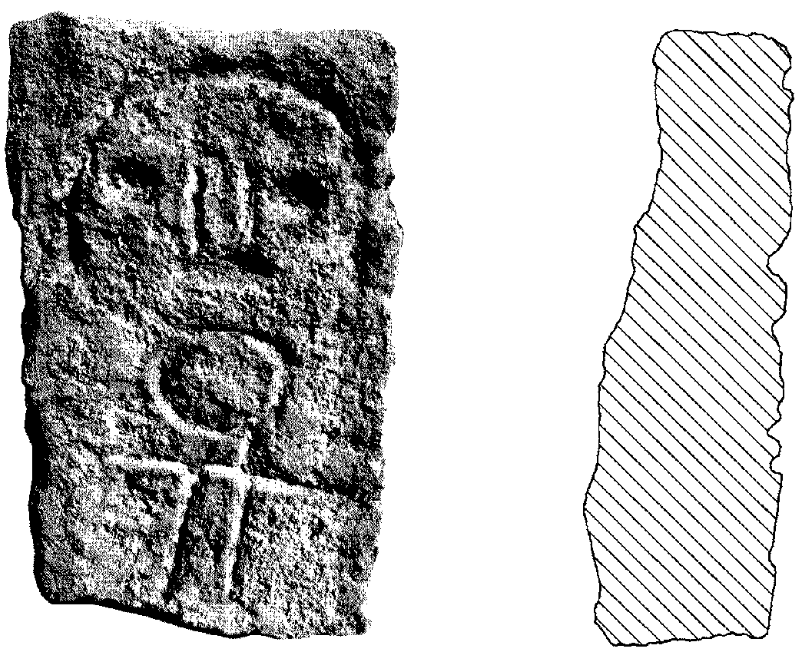


Fig. 53. Stele 44 Human figure and *pseudo-ankh* sign.

century B.C. where it was interpreted as the hieroglyphic sign *s3*, meaning protection:»*Il* (i-e the male figure*) porte un objet dans la main gauche, généralement décrit comme le symbole égyptien de la vie, l'ankh. Mais ce n'est pas vraiment l'ankh, car la tige verticale est fourchue à la base. Il nous a été suggéré qu'il s'agirait d'un noeud d'Isis mais la forme de l'objet en question n'est pas non plus conforme à ce symbole. Elle ressemble plus au signe porté par la déesse égyptienne Toéris...La signification de ce symbole est celle de protection*» (Beers 1991: 358 and fig.1). According to Wilkinson (1992: 177), the ends of the *ankh* in Egypt are separated in some archaic examples.

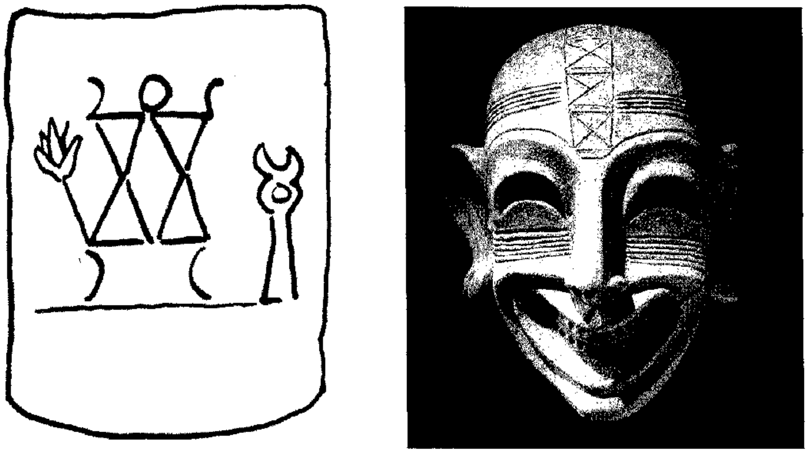


Fig. 54. Parallels to stele 45: a stele from Carthage (Bisi 1967: Fig. 29) and a mask from Bou Minjel (Parrot, Chéhab, Moscati 1975: Fig. 180).

Stele 45 (Fig. 55)

This stele was cut in hard and compacted beach-rock. Its lower part was thinned in order to provide it with a 10 cm high foot, which was buried in the ground when the stele was erected. In the middle of the stone there is a first symbol consisting of an isosceles triangle with a 13 cm long base and two sides, which have been prolonged beyond their intersection point. A 17 cm line tangent to the triangle summit was incised at an equal distance (17 cm) from both the upper and lower edge of the stele. A second identical, though smaller (base 8 cm and tangent line 11 cm long) motive, with an axis slightly deviated to the left, was added below the first one. It seems that originally only the first motive was planned because it is clearly centered. On the other hand, it is large enough to fill the central part of the stele. The deviation and the smaller size of the second triangle support this view.

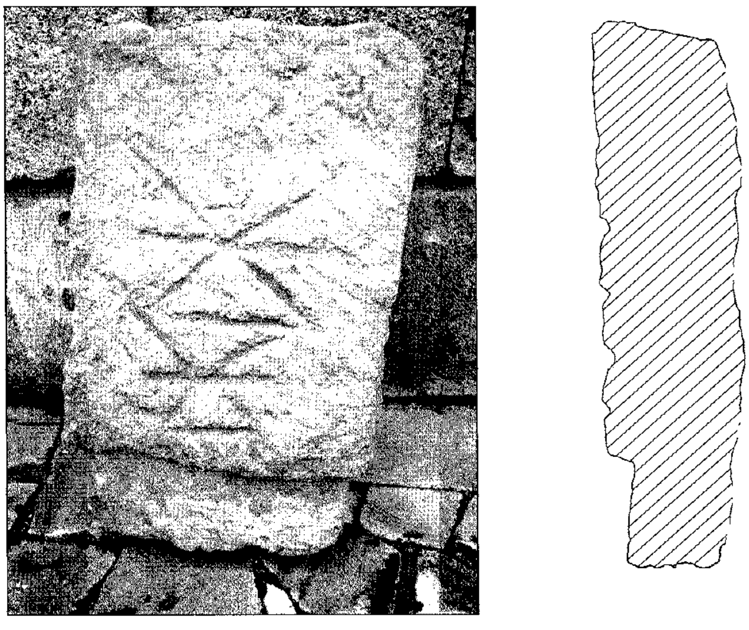


Fig. 55. Stele 45 Isoceles triangles.

It is interesting to note that Ernest Renan (1864: 647ff.; 662, 691) had already found similar, though slightly different signs carved at the entrance of funerary caves in various localities around Tyre (for an interpretation of the symbol, see Chapter III.2.e). According to Renan (1864: 662), this sign in Phoenicia is characteristic of the land of Tyre. Sarepta has also yielded the same motif (Pritchard 1988: Fig. 9: 2, dated to the LBA).

Similar symbols are also attested in Sardinia and Carthage though without the tangent line. Close parallels are found on the sacred rock of the *tophet* of Sulcis (Barreca 1986: 174, fig. 141) and on grotesque masks from Carthage. One example dated to the seventh-sixth century B.C. was found in the necropolis of Bou Minjel; it bears on the forehead and the skull a series of rectangles within which are intersecting diagonals, which form isosceles triangles (Parrot, Chéhab, Moscati 1975: 172, fig. 180).

Another terracotta mask has also on the same area, a series of the same symbol. (Moscati 1984: 171). On a stele from Carthage, there is a Tanit sign the lower part of which consists of two similar triangles represented side by side (Bisi 1967: Fig. 29). The same symbol also appears on another Carthaginian stele engraved on an altar (Brown 1986: 530). The same symbol was also found on two jars, one from Carthage and one from Pithecusa, in the shrines of Malta and Gozo (Garbini 1980: 179 and 183ff. and notes 20 to 24), as well as on a Phoenician seal (Galling 1941: 186, No 93 and Pl. 7, 93). It is also widely attested in profane contexts in Syria-Palestine where, according to Garbini (1980: 183), it represents a weighing measure.

The element that all the above-mentioned parallels lack is however the horizontal line, which appears so far only on the symbol of stele 45.

Stele 46 (Fig. 56)

Cut in sandy, granulated beach-rock, this L-shaped stele is largely eroded and in a bad state of preservation. It represents a person whose head only was sculpted in a three-dimensional way while the rest of the body seems to be in a seated position, an impression created obviously by the L-shape of the stele. The 15 cm long and 19 cm wide (maximal width) vertical part of the body forms a more or less regular trapezium and still preserves the traces of the cutting tools. These give at first sight the impression that the body is wrapped with bands of cloth. In fact, a careful observation of the stele shows that the two oblique traces of a chisel on the chest could represent the bent left arm of the person.

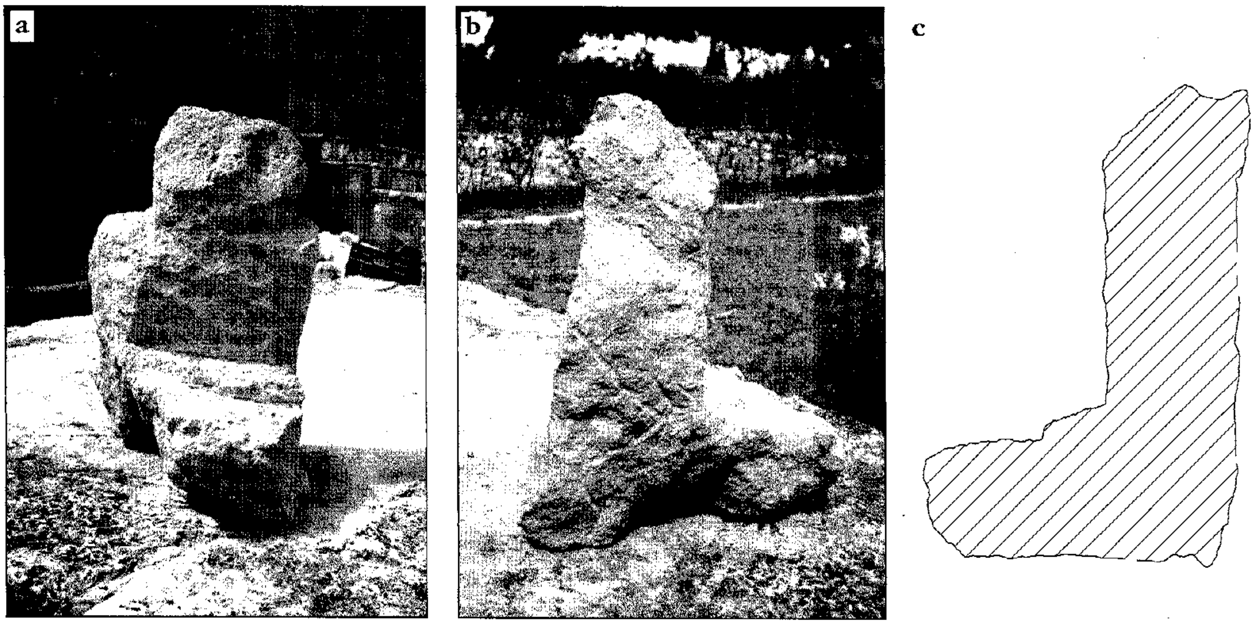


Fig. 56. Stele 46. L-shaped stele with human face. (a) Front view, (b) side view and (c) section.

The horizontal part of the body, 17 cm of maximal length and 12 cm of maximal width, is very crudely and irregularly cut. Its lower part has in its middle a 13 cm long and 5 cm deep cavity as well as a 10 cm wide protuberance at the back, which served as a foot and was probably buried in the ground when the stele was erected. On the left side of the stele, irregular strokes were cut in the stone.

The 18 cm long and 17 cm wide head was also shaped in a very crude way. The triangular face lacks a forehead and consists of a large nose and two eyebrow ridges. Under these latter, on both sides of the nose, two oblong cavities occupy the rest of the face. The latter's lower part including the mouth is broken. The neck-less head rests directly on the vertical part of the body.

In the West, mainly in Sicily, stelae are attested, which consist of a head cut in a three-dimensional form while the body consists of the shapeless stone (Moscati 1995: Pl. 84-87). The face of stele 46 has striking parallels in Sardinia, more specifically in Sulcis (Moscati 1985a: Pls. 29-31) and Monte Sirai (Garbini 1964: Pl. 46).

Stele 47 (Figs 57 and 58)

This stele was found in the baulk, which separated locus 0 and locus 1. It was associated with a number of stones, one of which belonged to a broken stele. The remaining stones are shapeless and it is very difficult to determine their original shape and function.

Stele 47 was cut in beach-rock with a very grainy texture. Only the head was preserved.

The male face, though slightly more elaborate than the previous example, presents the same general characteristics. The prominent features are the stylized nose and the two eyebrow ridges, which surround it on both sides. The slightly open mouth and the base of the nose overlap and the neck-less head rests directly on the stone. However, it differs from stele 46 in the following features: the triangular shape of the face is more accentuated, the ears are represented (the right ear is damaged) and a 4 cm narrow forehead is represented above the eyebrow ridges. At the top of the forehead an incision marks the beginning of a 2 cm-high edge, slightly leaning backwards, which might represent either the hair or a headdress. The same features are also found on heads represented on a stele from Selinunte (Moscati 1995: Pl. 87, 1). The face is comparable to that of the deity represented inside the stone shrine model from Lebanon (Seyrig 1966: VIII).



Fig. 57. Stele 47 *in situ*.

The top of the skull has the shape of an equilateral triangle of 13 cm long sides. Two of them join at the back of the head to form a poney tail, a sort of 9 cm long and 4 cm wide cylindrical braid, on both sides of which are two cavities. On top of the skull is a 9 cm long and 8 cm wide incised cross.

All the above features confer to the face a realistic character as well as a lively expression, which are lacking in stele 46. A close parallel (Fig. 59) is the male head discovered in tomb No 1 in Monte Sirai (Garbini 1964: Pl. 47) and displayed in the Museum of Cagliari. This sixth-fifth century B.C. head, to which Garbini attributed an apotropaic function (1964: 94-95), has the same characteristics as ours: triangular face, cavities under the eyes, stylized nose, no neck, incised mouth...

It is interesting to note in this context an information recorded by Denyse Le Lasseur (1922: 122) upon her visit to the site of Mahalib, a city belonging to the territory of Tyre: « *Au nord-est, Mr Bourgol nous montre une sculpture très grossière qui serait une tête humaine (?); elle surmonte une entrée de grotte dans laquelle on a trouvé, paraît-il, un sarcophage de plomb*».

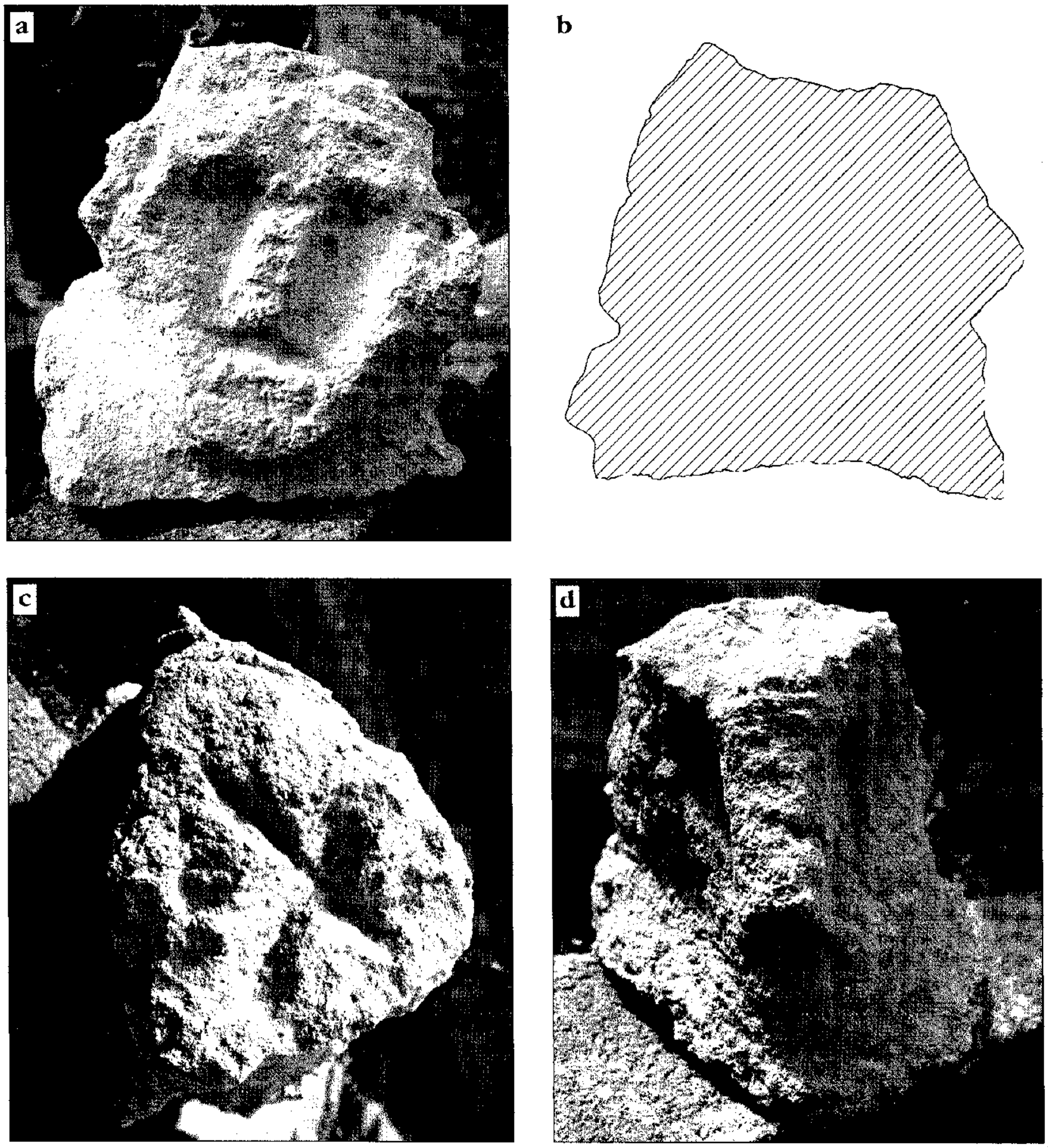


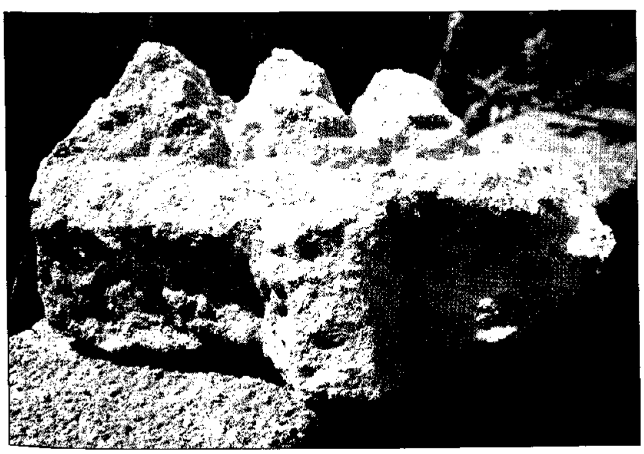
Fig. 58. Stele 47 Human head: face (a), section (b), top (c), back (d).



Fig. 59. A parallel to stele 47 from Monte Sirai (Garbini 1964, Studi Semitici 11).

Stele 48 (Fig. 60)

This broken stele was cut in badly compacted beach-rock and the surviving fragment belongs to the upper part of a monument, which seems to be an aedicula. On top of the flat cornice are four triangular protuberances probably representing *uraei*. Three of them (from left to right: 6 cm x 7 cm, 6 cm x 4 cm, 6 cm x 4 cm) are intact. The same type of cornice surmounted by triangular protuberances is attested on the ediculae from Uras (Bondì 1972: Pl. 56-57). Below the cornice, in the middle of the cavity forming the niche stands a 6 cm wide and 8 cm long pillar fragment, probably a *betyl*. Small shrines of this type with rectangular *betyls* inside are widely attested in the Phoenician and Punic world mainly North Africa (Bisi 1967: Pl.XXII, 1-2), Sicily (Bisi 1967: XXXVIII, 2) and Sardinia (Bisi 1967: Pl.XLIX, 1). This motif becomes extremely widespread during the Persian period (see below stele 54).



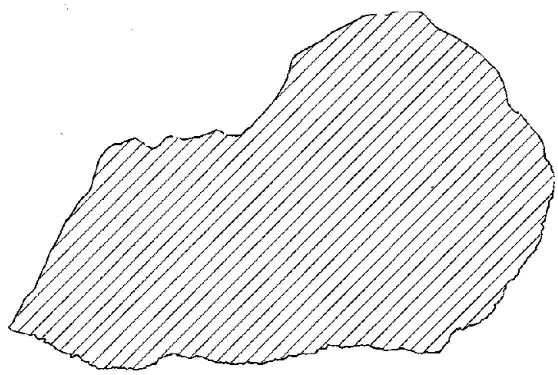


Fig. 60. Stele 48 Fragment of shrine with *uraei* and *betyl*.

Stele 49 (Fig. 61)

This rectangular stele is irregular and heavily eroded. It was roughly dressed into a rectangular shape. No symbol has been preserved. However, two shallow cavities can be seen on the obverse: a circular one, 8 cm in diameter and, below, an almost oval one, 12 cm long and 8 cm wide. These might be remnants of symbols, which have disappeared or which were left unfinished. In any case, the stone was clearly dressed and prepared to be a funerary stele. As previously mentioned, blank stelae are attested: examples from Motya (Moscati-Uberti 1981: Pl. 1 and 2), Hama and Sukas (Bonatz 2000: 156) provide good parallels.

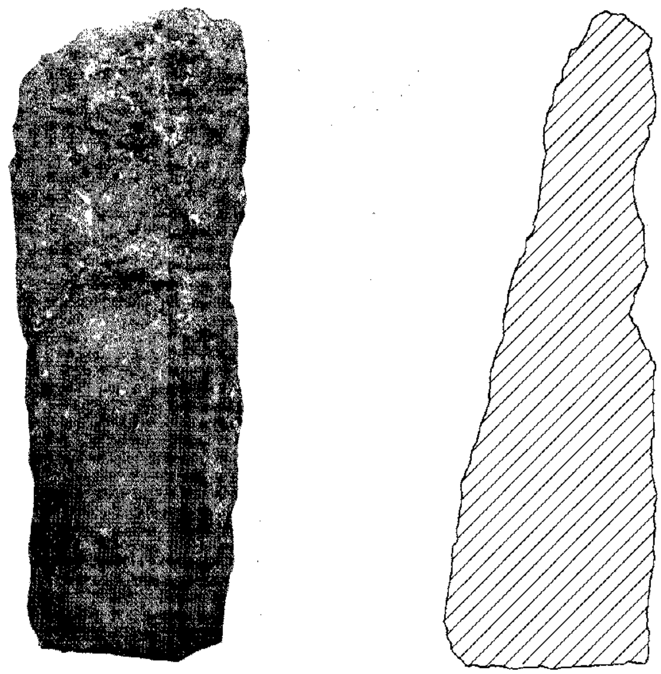


Fig. 61. Stele 49 Blank stele with no symbol and no inscription.

Stele 50 (Fig. 62)

This stele was found during the 1997 excavations in area VI, which had been opened by the Department of Antiquities representative, but which was then left unexcavated (Aubet 2004: 16). It was removed from site and taken to the Department of Antiquities storage in Tyre after having been recorded and photographed. When the excavators came to process the material and draw the finds, no trace of this fragment was found. In spite of thorough and systematic search, the stele fragment could not be found and the only available document is the photograph Fig. 62.

The fragment is a circular stone *ca* 20 cm in diameter, which obviously belonged to a larger monument. The stele was broken in antiquity and traces of the break are clearly visible under the face. The stele represents a human face very similar to that depicted on stele 43: it is an almost perfect circle with holes for the eyes and the mouth, which emphasizes the naïve and the «baby face»-like impression. The head is flat and only the face was sculpted. On the left, there is a semi-circular protuberance, which represents the ear, a feature that is absent on the face of stele 43. A striking parallel is the figure from a Punic tomb in Lilibeum (Tusa 1982: Pl. XIVc).

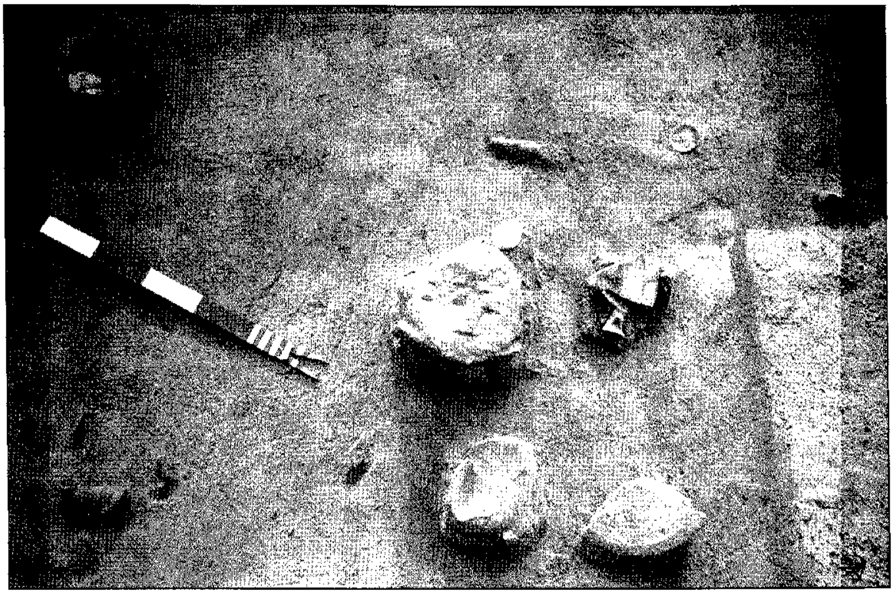


Fig. 62. Stele 50 Broken stele with human face.

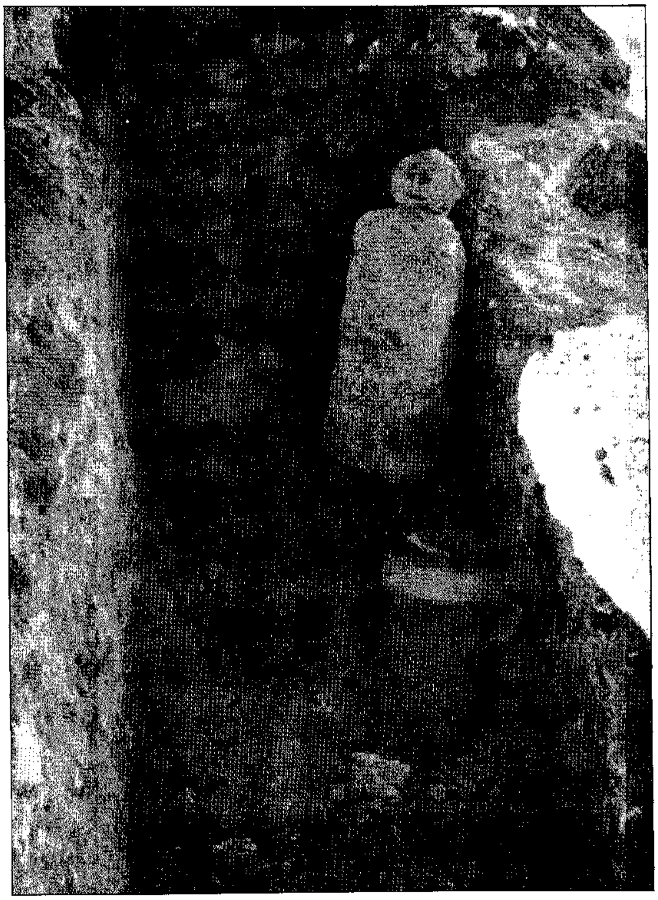


Fig. 63. A parallel to Stele 50 from Motya (Tusa: *Madrider Beiträge* 8, 14e).

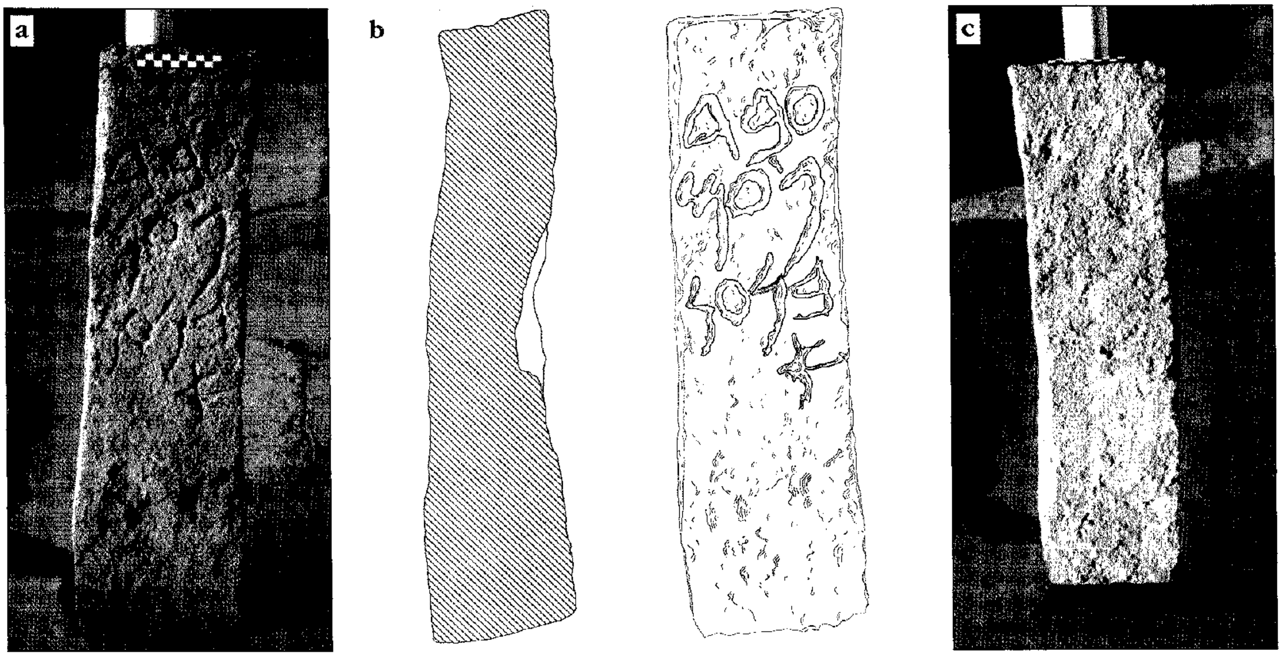


Fig. 64. Stele 51 (a) frontside with inscription *'bdp'm,* (b) drawing, (c) back side.

I.4.d_5 TYRE Stelae from the 2002 excavations in the cemetery of Tyre a.l-Bass

Stele 51 (Fig. 64)

This long rectangular stele was found during the 2002 excavations, which were undertaken by the University of Pompeu Fabra-Barcelona on the site of the Phoenician cemetery at al-Bass in Tyre. The stele was found equally distant to two 8th c. B.C. cinerary urns, Nos 68 and 69[4]. It was found lying on its inscribed face. This archaeological context thus suggests a date in the 8th c. B.C. for the stele.

This is the only inscribed Tyrian stele, which was found during regular excavations. The inscription consists in eleven very well preserved Phoenician signs arranged in four lines. The first line starts 7 cm below the upper edge of the stone. The signs are of a medium size ranging between 5 and 9,5 cm. The inscription consists as usual of the name of the deceased in the memory of whom the stele was erected followed by that of his father. It reads:

'bd
p'm
bn 'n

The personal name *'bdp'm,* as well as other theophorous names built with the divine element *p'm,* is attested in Phoenician onomastics (Benz 1972: 393) and it means «servant of (the god) *p'm*». This deity was worshipped in the Phoenician motherland as attested by the Phoenician graffiti written in Greek, which were found in Wasta, near Sidon (Milik 1954: 3-12). Lipinski (1995: 215ff) interprets the divine name as both «foot» and «phallus» and he associates the god with fertility cults in general and with sacred prostitution in particular (see also II.2.b). *'n'* is a hypocoristic meaning either «DN has answered» from the root *'ny* to answer or «Eye of DN» with a defective writing of *'yn* eye (Benz 1972: 381). A third possibility (Benz 1972: 380) is to interpret *'n* as the masculine counterpart of Anat.

4. The information concerning the archaeological context of stele 50 and 51was communicated to me by Maria Eugenia Aubet, director of the Tyre el-Bass excavations.

Since this divine name is clearly attested in Ugarit. *'n'* might be a hypocoristic name built with the divine name An. The absence of the preposition *lamed* is finally to be noted.

The evidence from the palaeography does not contradict the archaeological evidence and a date towards the end of the 8th c. can be suggested on the basis of the shape of the signs. However, the only letter characteristic enough to provide a close dating of the stele is *mem* with its oblique wavy head and its vertical shaft, a form which finds its closest parallels in the Kilamuwa and Limassol inscriptions, both dated to the 8th c. B.C. (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Table 1). *Pe* has an angular head and a very long (9,5 cm) and curving tail, but it does not provide a decisive clue for the dating of the inscription. The other letters, *beth, daleth*, and *nun*, which are attested in this form in the 8th but also in the 7th c. B.C., do not significantly contribute to the dating of the stele.

Stele 52 (Fig. 65)

This stele was found directly associated with cinerary urn No. 61, which is dated to the middle of the 9th c. B.C. It was found *in situ*, in a vertical position, with the upper edge of the stone broken. This suggests that the stele may have fallen in antiquity and may have been eventually re-erected since it is indeed difficult to assume that it was originally used with a broken upper edge.

The symbol was carved 4 cm above the lower edge of the stone. It represents an Egyptian hieroglyphic sign read *nfr*, meaning «good, perfect» (for parallels and interpretation see chapter III.2.d). The head is 8 cm in diameter and the vertical line is 8 cm long, which makes the overall height of the sign 16 cm. The vertical line meets the 10,5 cm long horizontal line in its middle, at a right angle.

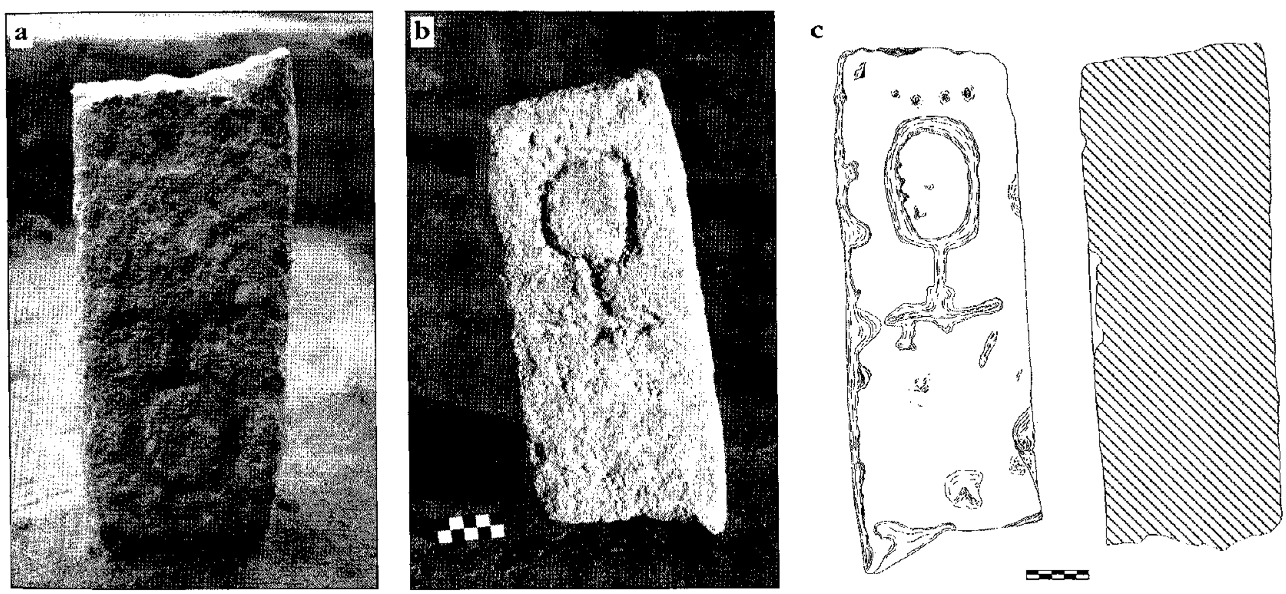


Fig. 65. Stele 52 with hieroglyphic *nfr* sign. (a) Frontside original position, (b) frontside upside down, (c) section and drawing.

I.4.e The Persian Period Stelae

Stele 53 (Fig. 66)

This fragment was bought in Sidon by Ernest Renan (1864: 366) and is today in the Louvre Museum. It represents a shrine the upper part of which is only preserved. It has a winged solar disc surmounted by a frieze of badly preserved *uraei* on its architrave. According to Wagner (1980: Cat. No 63) the original height of this monument must have been 80 to 90 cm, by analogy with the complete examples available. He dates it between 450 and 350 B.C.

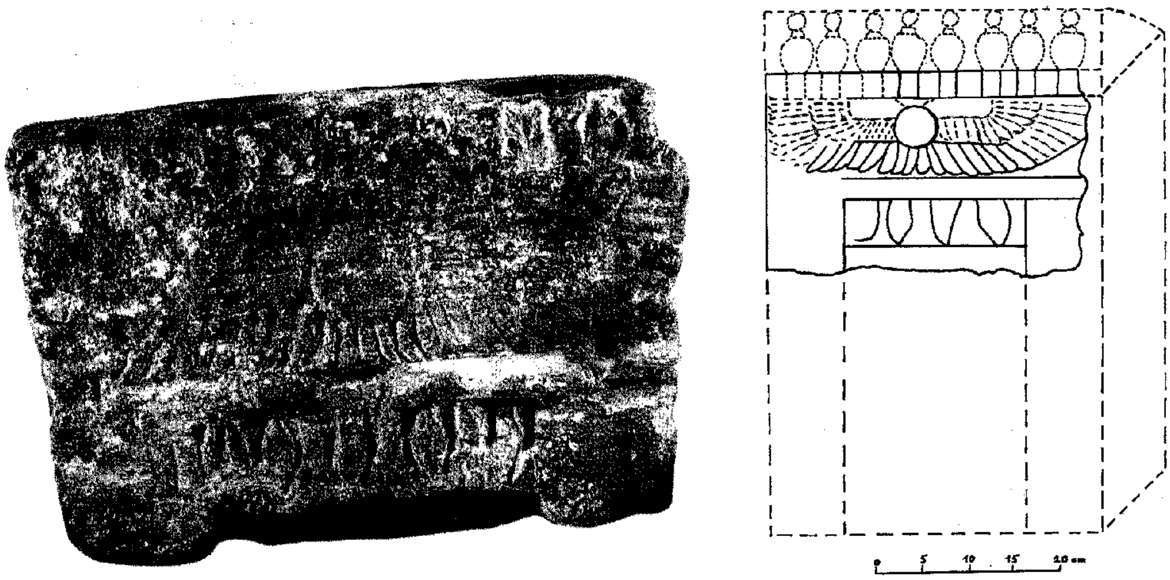


Fig. 66. Stele 53 Fragment from Sidon and sketch drawing. Louvre AO 4820 (Left Gubel 2002: No 74; right Wagner 1980: Pl. 5, 1).

Stele 54 (Fig. 67)

This stele, on display in the Beirut National Museum (No 2069), was found in the area of Burj esh-Shemali east of Tyre (Chéhab 1934: 44), which was used as a burial ground in the Iron Age and in the later classical periods. This stele was found in a necropolis located west of the village, which secures its funerary character. Chéhab dated it to the 2nd c. B.C. while others (Bisi 1967: 40; Wagner 1980: Cat. No 62) suggested a Persian period date for this type of monument, more precisely the first half of the 5th c. B.C. The stele represents an Egyptian *naiskos* with two *betyls* inside.

Chéhab (1934: 44) describes it as follows:» *Le décor...représente une porte égyptisante avec torse et gorge, surmontée d'une rangée de neuf uraeus vus de face, la tête portant le disque solaire. Au milieu de la gorge, un disque solaire est flanqué de deux uraeus. Dans l'espace ménagé par l'encadrement de la porte, deux piliers hauts de 45 cm et larges de 10 cm reposent sur un socle de forme égyptienne à gorge, tore et profil évasé. Le haut de chaque pilier est décoré d'un globe flanqué d'uraeus au-dessous de quatre uraeus vus de face et portant des globes sur la tête...*». Bisi (1971: Fig. 3) recognized pomegranates and not discs flanked by *uraei* on top of the *betyls.*

Stele 55 (Fig. 68)

This stele, which is today in the Louvre Museum (AO 2060), was purchased in Sidon. It was first published by Aimé-Giron (1934: 31-42) who carefully described it. There is no precise information concerning the circumstances and the place of its discovery but it is thought to come from Sidon (Gubel 2002: No 71). It is in fact very similar to the other stelae found in Sidon or its immediate vicinity. It is cut in calcareous sandstone and its workmanship is said to be of low quality.

The stele is decorated on the front and sides. It represents an Egyptian *naiskos* resting on a base with a so-called Astarte throne inside. On the architrave there is a frieze of *uraei*; below it a winged sun-disc flanked by two *uraei* and, on the lintel, a row of alternating lotus flowers and buds. On both sides of the shrine are palmettes. The lateral sides of the monument are also decorated with the same scene representing a male figure with a conical hat, holding a ram-headed scepter and a container, obviously priests offering libations.

Soyez (1972: 156, note 4), Bisi (1971: 26), and Nunn (2000: 16) dated it to the Persian period while Wagner (1980: Cat. No 51) and Gubel (2002: No 71) dated this stele as well as stele 56 and 57 in the 9th-8th c. B.C.

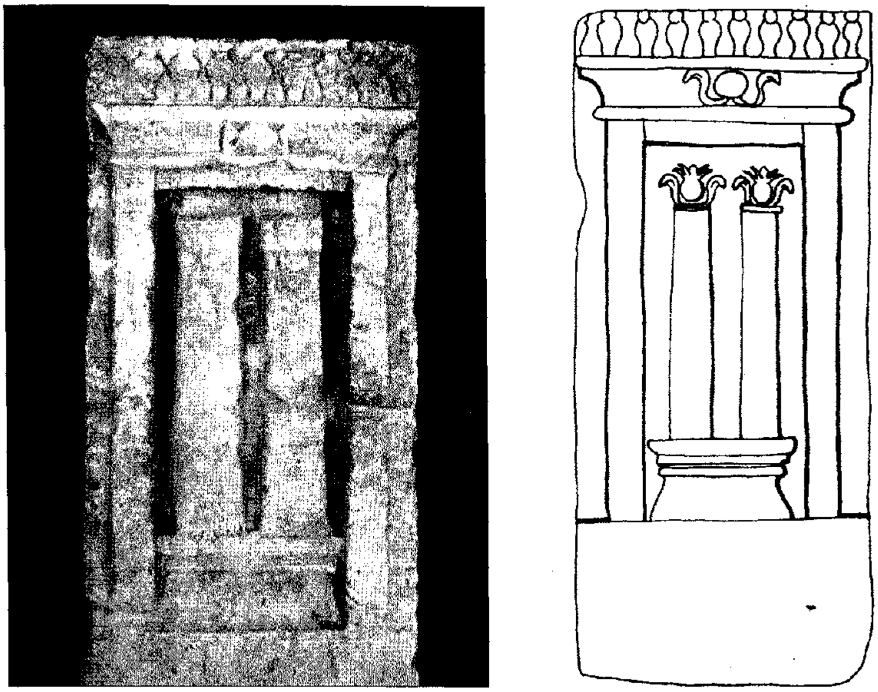


Fig. 67. Stele 54 from Burj esh-Shemali and sketch drawing (*Liban, l'Autre Rive*, Bisi 1971, Fig.3).

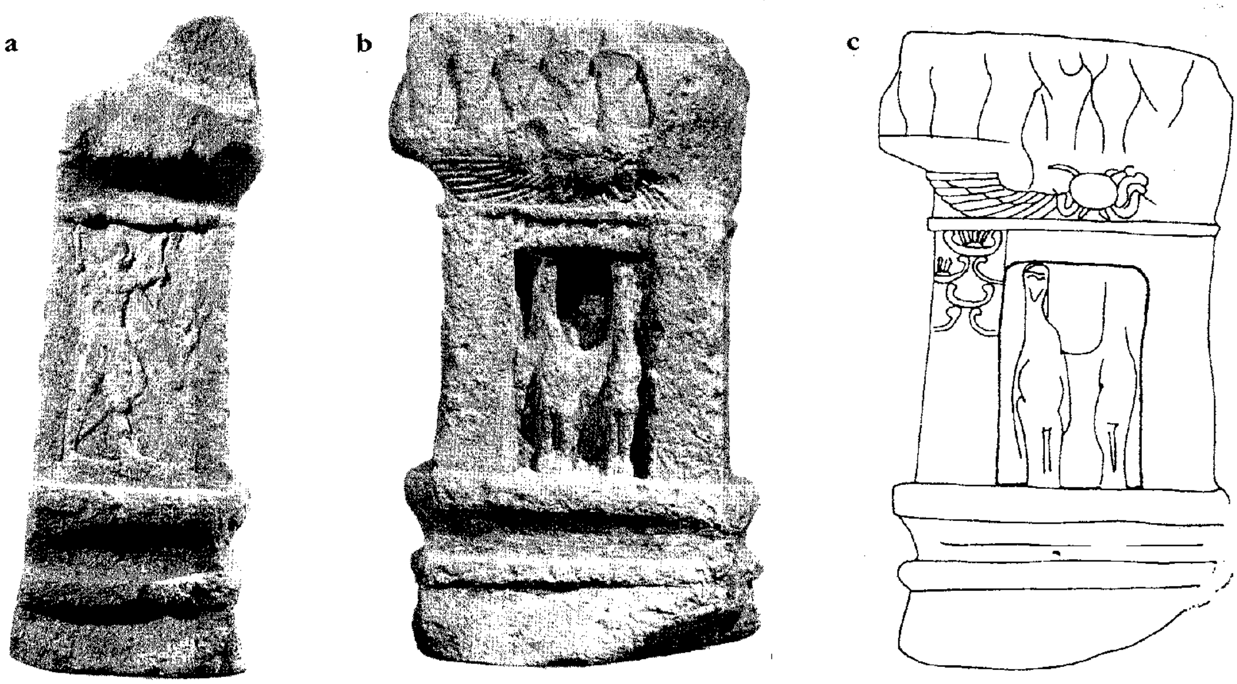


Fig. 68. Stele 55 Naiskos from Sidon. Louvre AO 2060 (Gubel 2002: 71; Nunn 2000: Pl. 2: 8; Aimé-Giron 1934). (a) Lateral side, (b) frontside, (c) sketch drawing.

Stele 56 (Fig. 69)

This stele was cut in sandstone and according to Hamdy Bey (1892: 44-45), was offered by Durighello, a private collector, to the Imperial Museum of Istanbul. Mendel (1914; 242-244 N0 92), who published it, dated it to the first half of the 5th c. B.C. (Compare Wagner 1980: Cat. No 52). This monument is a replica of stele 55 with one difference: on the lateral sides, instead of libating priests, a winged Egyptian goddess, Isis or Nephtys, is represented holding an unidentified object and wearing a sun-disc on her head. A cavity on the back of the throne indicates that most probably a *betyl*, now missing, was placed there.

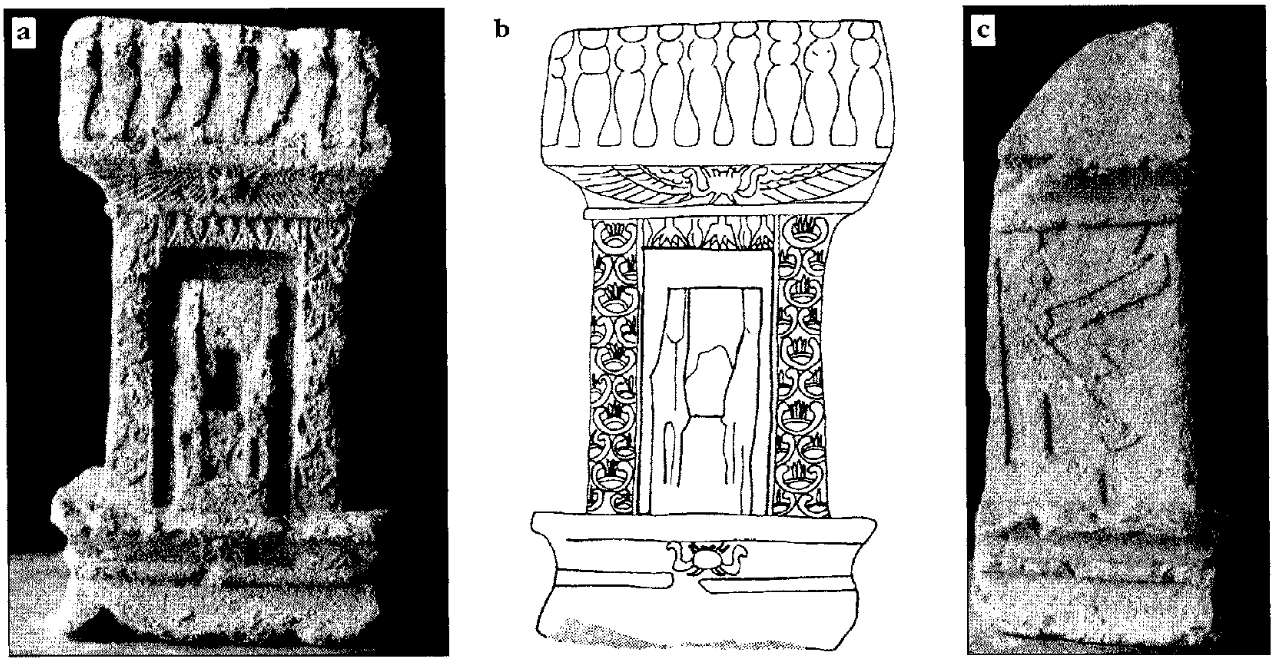


Fig. 69. Stele 56 *Naiskos* from Sidon in the Istanbul Museum (Nunn 2000: Pl.2: 7): (a) Frontside, (b) sketch drawing, (c) lateral side.

Stele 57 (Fig. 70)

This fragment of a funerary stele was probably found in Sidon and belonged to Durighello's private collection. In his publication of the monument, Dunand (1926: 126) does not mention the size and the circumstances of the discovery. The preserved upper part displays exactly the same decoration as stele 55. Dunand dated the monument vaguely before the third century B.C., because of the absence of any Greek influence. (For the date, compare Wagner 1980: Cat. No 53).

Stele 58 (Fig. 71)

This stele was cut in calcareous sandstone. It is in the Louvre Museum (AO 4904) and both its provenance and the way it was acquired are not documented. It appears in Ledrain's catalogue (1888: 54, No 114) but was not included by Wagner (1980) in his study. In the recent catalogue of Phoenician objects in the Louvre (Gubel 2002: 83, Fig. 72), it is listed as a Sidonian monument because of its similarity to other shrines from that city. The shrine is decorated exactly like stele 55 and 56. Its lateral sides however do not carry any representation and a hole on the back of the throne indicates that a removable object, now missing, was fixed in it. The rectangular form of the hole suggests that the missing piece was a *betyl*.

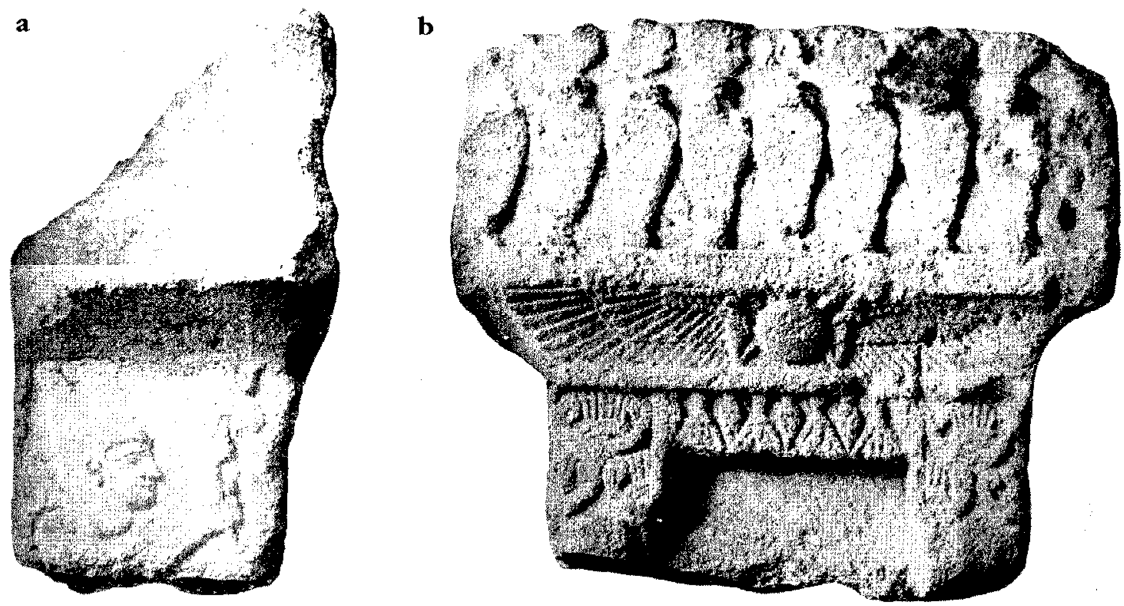


Fig. 70. Stele 57 Naiskos fragment from Sidon (Dunand 1926). Lateral (a) and frontside (b).

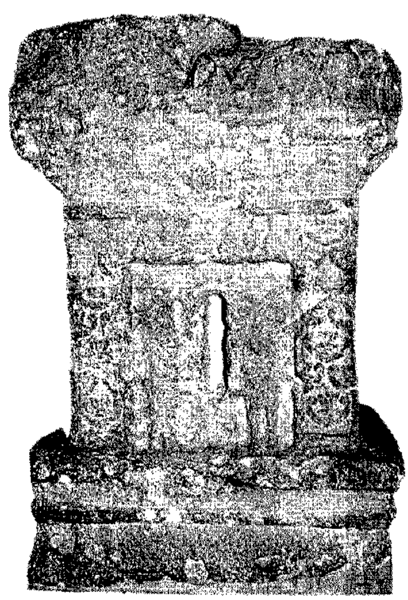


Fig. 71. Stele 58 Naiskos from Sidon Louvre AO 4904 (Gubel 2002: 72).

Stele 59 (Fig. 72)

This stele fragment was cut in calcareous sandstone. It is part of the Louvre Museum collection (AO 4819). It was bought on the market and its provenance is unknown. Like stele 58, it is assumed to have come from Sidon. It was published for the first time in 2002 (Gubel 2002: 73). The preserved part shows a frieze of *uraei* on top of a winged sun-disc. Only the upper right corner of the shrine is still visible under the lintel.

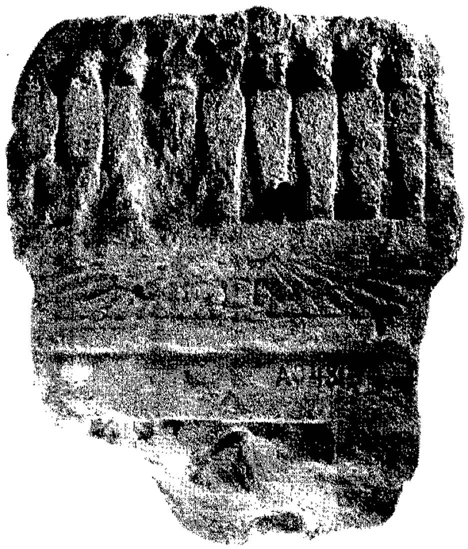


Fig. 72. Stele 59. *Naiskos* Fragment from Sidon. Louvre AO 4819 (Gubel 2002: 73).

I.4.f Punic Funerary Stelae

Stele 60 (Fig. 73)

In the winter of 1990, clandestine diggers found a stone with a four-line inscription in the locality of al-Ma'mura, southeast of Tyre. The stone was found in a tomb, next to the skull of a preserved skeleton. It was first published in *Semitica* (Sader 1993).

The stone is a neatly cut, rectangular white limestone block, slightly damaged on its lower edge. Several minor breaks can be seen on the surface but they did not affect the inscription, which is very well preserved and perfectly readable. The stone surface had been nicely smoothed before the inscription was carved. The inscription reads:

1. *hmnṣbt z špṭ bn ḥnb'l bn ml*
2. *qrtḥlṣ bn 'zrb'l h*
3. *špṭ bn ḥn' hrb bn*
4. *'dnb'l hrb*

«This is the commemorative stela of *špṭ*, son of *ḥnb'l*, son of *mlqrtḥls*, son of *'zrb'l*, the suffete, son of *ḥn'*, the rab, son of *'dnb'l*, the rab».

The inscription uses the term *mnṣbt*, which is a typical Punic form as opposed to Phoenician *mṣbt*. The latter appears on the 8th/7th c. B.C. stele 27. *mnṣbt* means «commemorative stele» (Jean and Hoftijzer 1965: 164). Bénichou-Safar (1982: 201-205) adds to this meaning that of «monument»:» *Il résulte de cet examen qu'en Phénico-punique, mṣbt ne s'applique pas de façon exclusive à des stèles commémoratives mais également à des constructions simples ou complexes*» (204). Teixidor (1986: 404) is more cautious in his interpretation of this term in the Punic inscription of stele 54 (see below):» *Hors du contexte archéologique il est difficile de savoir quelle sorte de monument indique le terme mnṣbt. A Athènes, Kition , le terme indique une stèle commémorative (funéraire)*».

Š is a relative pronoun indicating the belonging (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: §310, 2). *Špṭ* is a hypocoristic formed with the root *špṭ*, «to judge» (Halff 1963-64: 143; Benz 1972: 423) and is widely attested in Punic. *Ḥnb'l*, «Baal favored» (Halff 1963-64: 77 and 112; Benz 1972: 313-314), is also a typical Punic name. *mlqrtḥlṣ*, «Melqart saved» (Halff 1963-64:122; Benz 1972: 311; 347-348) is another well-attested name but the root *ḥlṣ* is known in Punic only (Jean-Hoftijzer 1965: 89). *'zrb'l*, «Baal helped», is widely attested (Halff 1963-64: 134-135; Benz 1972: 375-376). His title is *hšpṭ*, «the suffete» (Jean-Hoftijzer 1965: 316,II). For an exhaustive study of this function in the Carthaginian state see Huß (1985: 458ff.) and for the position of the suffete in Phoenicia see Teixidor (1979: 13ff.). *ḥn'* is a hypocoristic formed with the root *ḥnn*, «to favor» and is widespread in Punic (Halff 1963-64: 11, 1-112; Benz 1972: 313-314). *Rb* is a title or function (Jean-Hoftijzer 1965: 271) well attested in Carthage. It was studied by Huß (1979: 217ff.) who

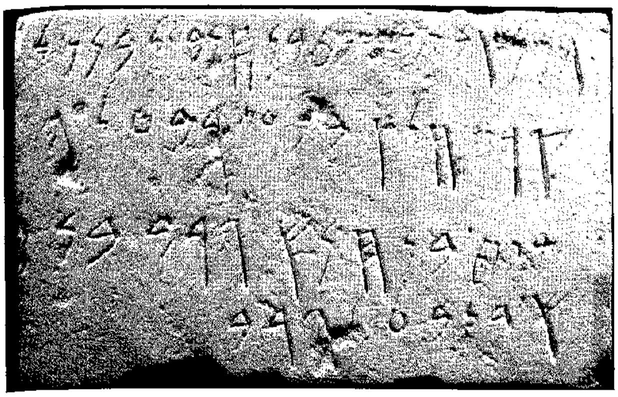
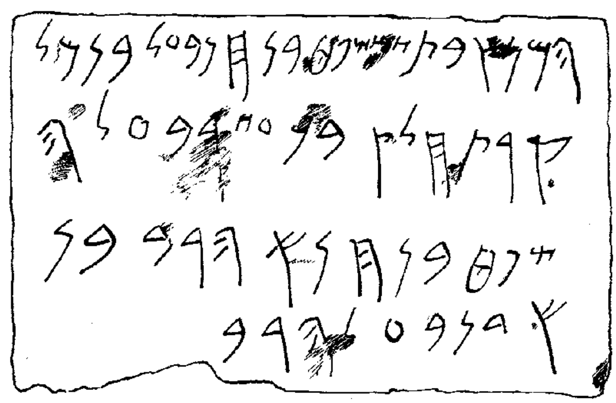



Fig. 73. Stele 60 *špṭ bn ḥnb'l* and *fac-simile* of the inscription.

suggests that the *rab «scheint demnach der Chef der Karthagischen Finanzbehörde gewesen zu sein»* (226). On the position of *rab* in Phoenicia see Teixidor (1979: 15ff.). *'dnb'l*, «My lord is Baal» (Halff 1963-64:85-86; Benz 1972: 260-261), is another widespread name in Phoenician and Punic onomastics.

This inscription owes its importance to the fact that it is a Carthaginian inscription found in Tyre, with all the historical implications that this entails. That this inscription is Carthaginian is clear from both the palaeographic and the linguistic evidence. The script is clearly Punic and more specifically Carthaginian. All letters find exact parallels in 4th/3rd c. B.C. Carthaginian inscriptions (Peckham 1968: 182-183) and this stone clearly dates to that period. All personal names attested in the inscription are widely, and sometimes exclusively, attested in Carthaginian onomastics. Moreover, the orthography of *mnṣbt* is clear evidence for the Punic origin of the inscription.

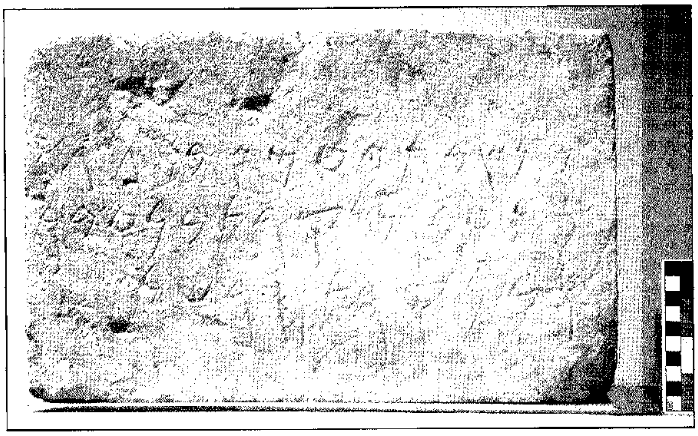
Concerning the content, we are in the presence of a very long genealogy: *špṭ* gives the names of five of his ancestors. This exceptionally long enumeration is most probably due to the fact that the author of the inscription went so far back in his genealogy as to reach three of his illustrious ancestors: a suffete and two *rabs*. It is very difficult to identify these high-ranking officials: *'zrb'l*, the suffete of our inscription, cannot be identified with any suffete of the same name known from Carthaginian inscriptions. It is however worth noting that *CIS* I, 2: 2378 mentions a *'zrb'l* son of *ḥn'* son of *'dnb'l*, i-e a man having both the same name and the same genealogy as our suffete. However, the *'zrb'l* of *CIS* I, 2: 2378 as well as his father and grandfather have no titles. We should therefore conclude that the similarity between the two genealogies is nothing but a mere coincidence. *CIS* I, 2: 623 also mentions a *'zrb'l* son of *ḥn'*, but here again without any titles. It is not surprising to have several identical filiations because these names are extremely common in Carthage.

Concerning the two *rabs*, *ḥn'* and *'dnb'l*, respectively son and father, it is also very difficult to identify them with other *rabs* known from Carthaginian inscriptions. In the list of Carthaginian *rabs* provided by Huß (1979: 230-232), there are several *'dnb'l* and several *ḥn'*, but none of them has the same genealogy as the *rabs* of our inscription.

Thus, the Punic inscription from al-Ma'mura seems to have added a new suffete and two new *rabs* to the already known list of Carthaginian suffetes and *rabs*. Unfortunately, it adds no evidence for a better understanding of these two functions. Since the inscription dates to the 4th/3rd c. B.C., it is possible that the high-ranking ancestors of *špṭ* exercised their functions at the end of the 5th and in the first half of the 4th century B.C. because three generations separate *špṭ* from *'zrb'l*, four separate him from *ḥn'* and five separate him from *'dnb'l*. His family seems to have been very influent in the fourth century but lost its prominent position with his grandfather. It is useless to speculate on the reasons that brought *špṭ*, his father or grandfather, to Tyre. This question and many others concerning the presence of Carthaginians in Tyre will have to await further discoveries from archaeological excavations in the area.

Stele 61 (Fig. 74)

This rectangular funerary stele was cut in a limestone block. It was found in Tyre and requisitioned by the Lebanese Department of Antiquities where it still is. It has a new inventory number 13270.Teixidor (1980: 348 and Fig. 12) published its three-line Punic inscription and dated it to the 4th c. B.C. It was later studied by Bordreuil and Ferjaoui (1988). It reads:



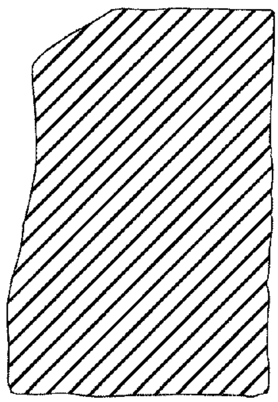




Fig. 74. Stele 61 *y'mṣ bn gr'*.

mnṣbt y'mṣ bn gr'
bn 'bdmlqrt bn'bd
' bn qrtḥdšt

Commemorative stele of *y'mṣ* son of *gr'*,
son of *'bdmlqrt* ,son of *'bd*
', the Carthaginian (lit. «son of Carthage»)

The personal names *y'mṣ*, of uncertain meaning, and *'bdmlqrt* , «servant of (the god) Melqart», are attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics (Benz 1972: 128 and 371), *gr'* and *'bd'*, respectively «client of (DN)» and «servant of (DN)», are also two well-known hypocoristica. *bn qrtḥdšt* was translated by Teixidor as «*natif de Carthage*», (1977: 268) which indicates the Carthaginian origin of the family of *y'mṣ*. The same expression is found in the inscription of stele 62.

Stele 62 (Fig. 75)

This stele belongs to the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities collection and has the new inventory number 12657. It is of unknown provenance and was probably requisitioned or purchased on the market before 1975 but was not on display like stele 61. It is published here for the first time.

The slightly trapezoidal stele was cut in limestone. Black spots, resulting from the fire that destroyed one of the Department of Antiquities rooms where it was stored, are clearly visible on its surface. Breaks on the ed-

ges of the stone, mainly in the lower right corner, have partly damaged the 6-line Phoenician inscription.

The script is neat and regular and the signs are of medium size. The inscription reads:

hmnṣb˺t˺ z
'š lbʿlšlk
h˺s˺pr bn b˺ʿ
lḥlṣ bn ˹g˺r˹y˺
b˺n˺ qrtḥd
[š]t˺

«This commemorative stele, which (belongs) to *bʿlšlk*, the scribe, son of *bʿlḥlṣ*, son of *gry*, the Carthaginian (lit. «son of Carthage»)».

The deceased in the memory of whom the stele was erected was a scribe and it would not be far-fetched to assume that he wrote his own epitaph. *Bʿlšlk*, the scribe, is of Carthaginian descent but he was probably born and raised, and he certainly died in Phoenicia. The additional evidence provided by stele 62 seems to strengthen the assumption that there were Carthaginian scribes in Phoenicia as suggested above.

The author of the inscription, whoever he may have been, *bʿlšlk* or another scribe, was trained in a Carthaginian scribal school. The inscription can be indeed classified as Punic, not only on palaeographic grounds but also on the fact that it uses Punic *mnṣbh* and not Phoenician *mṣbh*. The palaeography of the inscription is slightly different from that of stelae 60 and 61: it does not share the very elongated and partly thickened forms characteristic of 4th-early 3rd c. B.C. Carthaginian signs but shows more archaic features which are often similar to the local Persian Period Phoenician inscriptions of Byblos and Sidon (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Tables 1 & 2; Peckham 1968: 94ff.). Most characteristic of the early Punic (5th/4th c B.C.) and 5th/4th c. B.C. Phoenician form of the signs are: *aleph* which, according to Peckham's terminology (1968: 197), is of the formal type with the headlines joined to left of the shaft in a curved juncture, a form typical of 5th/4th c. B.C.; *he* which still has headlines attached to the shaft, very similar again to 5th/4th c. B.C. Phoenician examples; *zayin* with its flattened form very close to that of the Yehimilk and Eshmunazar inscriptions and quite different from later Punic *zayin*; it is indeed attested in this form in two Punic inscriptions of the 4th c. only and changes drastically later (Peckham 1968: 179 and 203); *kaf* with its short horizontal stroke almost perpendicular to the shaft finds again its closest parallel in the Batnoam inscription rather than in Punic signs; *šin* is written twice: the first one has a rounded form while the second one has a «semi-triangular shape with the center line dropping into the apex of the angle» (Peckham 1968: 99) and is found in late 5th/early 4th c. B.C. inscriptions of the motherland and in a 5th c. Punic inscription (Peckham 1968: 178). *Ayin* as an open circle is attested in the 4th c. inscription of Yehimilk as well as in the Punic world; *samekh* with its vertical shaft and its head which is practically similar to a horizontal *yod*, as well as *ṣade* are close to 5th c. B.C. signs; *qof* with its triangular heads, *lamed* with its shaft tilted to the right and its short dropline curved to the left, *taw* with a tilted shaft, a long crossbar and a short dropline, and finally *ḥet* with its long parallel shafts are commonly used in the Carthaginian script of the 5th/4th c B.C. All these forms indicate a 5th or maybe early 4th c. B.C.-date at the latest (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: Tables 1 & 2; Peckham 1968: 94ff.).

To conclude: the script of stele 62 seems to represent an earlier stage of the Punic script where Phoenician scribal traditions were still dominant in spite of emerging regional differences. Peckham (1968: 199, 210, 213) had already noticed the close relationship between the early Punic and the local Phoenician, mainly Sidonian script, an observation that finds additional support in the script of stele 62.

Concerning the content, the personal names *bʿlšlk*, «Baal has provided» (Benz 1972: 98 & 416), *bʿlḥlṣ* «Baal has saved» (Benz 1972: 90 et 311) and *˹g˺ry*, «Client of (DN)» (Benz 1972: 104), are so far exclusively attested in Punic onomastics, a feature that is explained by the Carthaginian origin of the family. The expression *bn qrtḥdšt* which is applied to *gry*, grandfather of *bʿlšlk*, is attested also on stele 61: both inscriptions go in their genealogy as far back as to reach their Carthaginian ancestor.

Finally, attention should be drawn to two grammatical features: First, *z* is here a demonstrative and *'š* is a relative pronoun. Compare the formula *hmnṣb˺t˺ z 'š l* + PN used in this inscription to that used in stele 60 *hmnṣbt z* + PN.

Second, *bʿlšlk* calls himself *hspr*. This is additional evidence for the systematic use of the article before the profession in Phoenician and Punic (Friedrich-Röllig 1970: 151). Finally, *gry* is a hypocoristic formed with *yod* while in Phoenician onomastics, it is attested with *aleph* as in *gr'*.



Fig. 75. Stele 62 *b'lšlk* the scribe.

Table I. The Stelae.

Stele No	Provenance	Inscription	Symbol	Date B.C.	Location	Preservation	Size in cm H x W x T	*Editio princeps*
1	Tell el-Burak (E)	*l'bb'l*	Broken sun-disc	7th/6th c.	DGA Sidon	Original size	50 x 24 x 19	Kamlah-Sader 2003. TB02: 15
2	Khalde (E)	*gtty*	None	9th c.	DGA Sidon?	Original size	n.a.	Bordreuil 1982
3	Sidon (E)	*l'bb' bn mr'*	None	6th/5th c.	DGA Beirut	Original Size	n.a.	Teixidor 1982
4	Tyre (L)	*bn tnt 'l'*	None	7th/6th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	73 x 15 x 13	Sader 1992 TT 91. S3
5	Tyre (L)	*lb'y*	Sun-disc	7th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	61 x 26 x 8-24	Sader 1992 TT 91.S4
6	Tyre (L)	*'bd[xx] bn b'ly*	*Ankh* sign	6th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	58,5 X 18, 5-24 x 10	Sader 1992 TT 91. S5
7	Tyre (L)	*'štrt l[']t*	Shrine	9th/8th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	44 x 30-32 x 16-18	Sader 1992 TT 91. S8
8	Tyre (L)	*l'mlšmn*	None	8th/7th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	76 x 19-22, 5 x 10-19	Sader 1992 TT 91. S10

Table I

Stele No	Provenance	Inscription	Symbol	Date B.C.	Location	Preservation	Size in cm H x W x T	*Editio princeps*
9	Tyre (L)	None	Human figure	n.d.	DGA Beirut	Original size	56,2 x 36 x 13,6	Sader 1991 TT 91 S6
10	Tyre (L)	None	Shrine, sun-disc	n.d.	DGA Beirut	Original Size	58 x 19-24 x 10-19	Sader 1991 TT 91. S11
11	Tyre (L)	None	Lotus bud	n.d.	DGA Beirut	Original Size	47,5 x 18 x 1 0-16	Sader 1991 TT 91. S12
12	Tyre (L)	*grḥmn*	*Uraei*, crescent moon, solar disc	8th/7th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	56 x18,8 x 11,2-38	Sader 1991 TT 91. S1
13	Tyre (L)	*tnt šb' št 'lm*	None	7th/6th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	69,5 x 20 x 14	Sader 1991 TT 91. S2
14	Tyre (L)	*mlqrt'b*	Crescent moon and solar disc	8th c.	DGA Beirut	Original Size	41 x 30 x 7-11	Sader 1991 TT 91. S7
15	Tyre (L)	*grgš*	Horseshoe-shaped symbol	7th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	51,5 x 24 x 8	Sader 1991 TT 91 S9
16	Tyre (L)	*lšm'*	None	10th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	64,4 x 31, 3 x 21,4	Unpublished
17	Tyre (L)	*mlqrt'b*	*ankh*	9th/8th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	65 x 27 x 9	Unpublished
18	Tyre (L)	*'ltyjmm bt gmr*	None	8th/7th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	56 x 32,5 x 8	Unpublished
19	Tyre (L)	*hd'*	None	7th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	17 x 20 x 7,5	Unpublished
20	Tyre (L)	*lšpṭ bn 'zr*	Damaged. Circular head of *ankh* preserved	7th/6th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	60,3 x 22,8 x 6	Unpublished
21	Tyre (L)	*mṣjry bn b'lyṭb*	None	8th/7th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	31,2 x 23 x 5,8	Unpublished
22	Tyre (L)	*[xxx]ḥ*	None	n.d.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	18,7 x 21,2 x 6	Unpublished
23	Tyre (L)	*ysp 'm'ḥ*	None	8th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	47 x 27,2 x8	Unpublished
24	Tyre (L)	*btšḥr bt grtb'l*	Horshoe-shaped motif	8th/7th c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	45,2 x 20,7 x 8	Unpublished

Table I

Stele No	**Provenance**	**Inscription**	**Symbol**	**Date B.C.**	**Location**	**Preservation**	**Size in cm H x W x T**	***Editio princeps***
25	Tyre (L)	*lšmny[l]*	Circular motif on horizontal line (*ankh*?). Stone colored red	$7^{th}/6^{th}$ c.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	35 x 19,5 x 8	Unpublished
26	Tyre (L)	None	Cross motif, *ankh* signs and sun discs	n.d.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	37 x 25,5 x 7,5	Unpublished
27	Tyre (L)	None	Cross, crescent moon, disc	n.d.	DGA Beiteddin	Sawn	59 x 27 x 21,1	Unpublished
28	Tyre (L)	None	Cross and U- shape	n.d.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	52,5 x 24,5 x 23,5	Unpublished
29	Tyre (L)	None	U-shape	n.d.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	52,5 x 25 x 15	Unpublished
30	Tyre (L)	*’mtspr*	None	8^{th} c.	DGA Beiteddin	Original size	60,2 x 27 x 22,5	Unpublished
31	Tyre (L)	*mbry bn ysp bn ’myḥ*	None	7^{th} c.	Hecht Museum	Original size	51,5 x 27-29 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3017
32	Tyre (L)	*mṣbt mlk bn ‘štrtg*	*Pseudo -ankh* with pomegranate inside	$8^{th}/7^{th}$ c.	Hecht Museum	Original size	53,5 x 34 x 8	Lemaire 2001 H-3016
33	Tyre (L)	*gr’šmn*	None	$8^{th}/7^{th}$ c.	Hecht Museum	Original size	36 x 25,5 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3008
34	Tyre (L)	*’mtmskr*	None	$8^{th}/7^{th}$ c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	21,5 x 23 x 8	Lemaire 2001 H-3005
35	Tyre (L)	*brb.*	U-shape	7^{th} c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	24 x 21-26 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3011
36	Tyre (L)	*l’mn*	None	$8^{th}/7^{th}$ c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	37,5 x 21 x 6	Lemaire 2001 H-3013
37	Tyre (L)	*tm’’[l]*	None	7^{th} c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	32 x 14 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3015
38	Tyre (L)	*lgrt’*	Cross	$8^{th}/7^{th}$ c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	38 x 20 x 8	Lemaire 2001 H-3014

Table I

Stele No	Provenance	Inscription	Symbol	Date B.C.	Location	Preservation	Size in cm H x W x T	*Editio princeps*
39	Tyre (L)	*šb‘t bt ‘zb‘l*	None	7th/6th c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	30 x 13-15 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3010
40	Tyre (L)	*lmlk’ bt pdn*	None	7th/6th c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	35,5 x 23-27 x 5	Lemaire 2001 H-3009
41	Tyre (L)	*lklbt bt ‘bskn*	None	7th c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	31 x 20-24 x 7	Lemaire 2001 H-3007
42	Tyre (L)	*‘štrt ’sp*	*Pseudo -ankh*	7th c.	Hecht Museum	Sawn	30 x 21-20 x 7,5	Lemaire 2001 H-3006
43	Tyre (E)	None	Naos	n.d	DGA Tyre	Original size	57,5 x 40 x 31,5	Sader 2004 TT 97-V-002-58
44	Tyre (E)	None	Human figure and *ankh* sign	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Original size	45 x 29 x 14,2	Sader 2004 TT97-XIII-002-31
45	Tyre (E)	None	Isoceles triangles	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Original size	49 x 8-30, 2 x 19,2	Sader 2004 TT97-X-002-5
46	Tyre (E)	None	L-shaped human figure	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Original size	44,3 x 28,7 x 34	Sader 2004 TT97-III-002-262
47	Tyre (E)	None	Human head	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Broken	24 x 20,7 x 22,7	Sader 2004 TT97-I-002-308
48	Tyre (E)	None	Shrine lintel and *betyl*	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Broken	15,5 x 27,9 x 19	Sader 2004 TT97-0/I-002-1
49	Tyre (E)	None	Circular cavities	n.d.	DGA Tyre	Original size	60 x 23 x 19	Sader 2004 TT97-XIII-002-29
50	Tyre (E)	None	Human face	n.d.	DGA Tyre?	Broken	*ca* 25 cm in diameter	Unpublished
51	Tyre (E)	*‘bd p‘m bn ‘n’*	None	8th/7th c.	DGA Tyre	Original size	72 x 19 x	Unpublished
52	Tyre (E)	None	*Nefer* sign	9th c.	DGA Tyre	Broken	34 x 13,5-14, 5 x 14-14,8	Unpublished
53	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Louvre Museum AO 4820	Broken	Height: *ca* 23 cm; Original height estimated 80-90 cm; Width: 35 cm	Renan 1864

Table I

Stele No	Provenance	Inscription	Symbol	Date B.C.	Location	Preservation	Size in cm H x W x T	*Editio princeps*
54	Burj esh-Shemali	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	DGA Beirut 2069	Original size	108 x 50 x 42	Chéhab 1934
55	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Louvre Museum AO 2060	Original Size	60 x 32 x 17	Aimé-Giron 1934
56	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Istanbul Museum	Original size	65 x 36 x 29	Mendel 1914
57	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Durighello Collection	Fragment	n.a.	Dunand 1926
58	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Louvre Museum AO 4904	Original Size	58 x 37,5 x 22	Ledrain 1888
59	Sidon	None	Shrine imitating Egyptian *naiskos*	6th/5th c.	Louvre Museum AO 4819	Fragment	33 x 26 x 15	Gubel 2002
60	Maamura (L)	*hmnṣbt z špṭ bn ḥnb'l bn mlqrtḥlṣ bn ' zrb'l hšpṭ bn ḥn' hrb bn 'dnb'l hrb*	None	4th/3rd c.	Unknown	Original size	31 x 19,5 x 11	Sader 1994
61	Tyre (L)	*mnṣbt y'mṣ bn gr'ḥn ' bd' bn qrtḥdšt*	None	4th c.	DGA Beirut	Original Size		Teixidor 1980
62	Unknown	*hmnṣbt z 'š lb'l šlk hspr bn b'lḥlṣ bn gry bn qrtḥdšt*	None	5th/4th c.	DGA Beirut	Original size	26,5 x 17,5 x 8	Unpublished

CHAPTER II: THE EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

II.1 THE PHOENICIAN SCRIPT

II.1.a General Characteristics

Thirty-six of the stelae described in Chapter I (Figs. 96-101), are inscribed with Phoenician signs. They cover a territory extending from Khalde in the north to Tyre in the south. If the evidence from the Phoenician funerary stelae from Palestine (Delavault-Lemaire 1979), mainly those from Akhziv (Cross 2002), is added to that of the Lebanese stelae, the epigraphic collection would cover all the territory of the Phoenician kingdoms of Sidon and Tyre.

These inscriptions range from the 10th to the 6th c. B.C. This dating, which was mainly based on palaeography, found further and recent support in the archaeological evidence provided by the Tyrian cemetery of al-Bass, which, according to stratigraphic information, was in use during the same period (Aubet 2004: 465).

The corpus represented by the Phoenician funerary inscriptions has the principal advantage of being a homogeneous group, funerary in character, representing an informal Phoenician script, and spreading over five centuries in the same geographical area. All attested signs occur more than once and in more than one period. *aleph, beth, lamed, mem, šin* and *taw* have the longest life span and occur uninterruptedly. This collection of funerary inscriptions is certainly not the only pre-Hellenistic epigraphic corpus from south Lebanon. A large body of pre-Hellenistic texts like the royal inscriptions and *ostraca* of Sidon (Elayi 1989) dated to the Persian period, the inscriptions from Sarepta dated between the 7th and the 4th c. B.C. (Teixidor 1975: 97 ff; Pritchard 1982: 83 ff), and the crater from Sidon dated to the 8th c. B.C. (Puech 1994), to name but the most important, are well known and they have yielded valuable information about the development of the south Phoenician script. Nevertheless, their uneven distribution in time and space as well as their different character makes it difficult to trace changes in individual letters over a long period of time.

Twenty-one of the twenty-two letters of the Phoenician alphabet are used in these inscriptions. If the restoration of *ṣade* in the inscription of stele 21 is correct, *waw* would be the only missing letter in this repertoire.

The script of the stelae is generally crude and irregular but some inscriptions are neatly written. The weathering of the stone often deepened the lines of the letters, causing them to loose their original edges. This distortion of the letters contributed to the impression of un-skilled writing. Though coarse, the script is nevertheless consistent. Within a given chronological range sign forms are coherent and display the same characteristics. The sign *mem* for example, is written in the same way on most 8th/7th c. stelae (Fig. 98a and 98b, especially stele 8, 14, 21, and 34).

The signs vary greatly in size: some are deeply chiseled and very big up to 16 cm long, while others are written with sharp and thin lines and are of medium (6 to 7 cm), or even small size (3-5 cm). This difference in the size and shape of the letters may have been influenced, in part, by the difference in hardness and texture of the rock.

Finally, two stelae, 13 and 31, display a characteristic feature, which consists in writing the first three letters of the inscription much larger than the rest. This feature remains unexplained.

In spite of its general conformity to the attested Phoenician scripts, that of the funerary inscriptions displays a certain unprofessional character, which raises the issue of the identity of the scribe(s). These inscriptions were not carefully executed and could not therefore have been written by a skilled and well-trained hand. Since literacy was presumably not very widespread among the lower class of the population in Phoenicia (on literacy in the ancient Near East see Millard 1992) and since carving symbols did require some know-how, it is difficult to assume that any individual could produce inscribed and decorated tombstones. There probably existed a class of stonecutters «specializing» in cutting and in engraving tombstones with names and/or symbols, for remuneration, as is still the case in many modern societies. It is difficult to trace this profession in the available written record but assuming its existence is certainly not far-fetched. The clients who were of very modest condition, had to go to «cheap» professionals, who produced items of low quality and poor workmanship. Some, who could not even afford this cheap service, had blank and roughly hammered stones placed on their graves.

II.1.b The Development of the Individual Signs[1]

The development of each alphabetical sign is presented separately. The arrangement follows the chronological development from left to right. Without being to scale, the copy shows the differences in size and thickness of the letters as attested in the various inscriptions.

Aleph (Fig. 76)

Aleph is attested uninterruptedly from the 9th to the 6th c. B.C. The oldest form of the sign has a cross line tilted to the right and the lines of the head join at a narrow angle to the left of the shaft. Until the 7th c. B.C., this form of the sign remained constant with two exceptions on stele 33 and 36 where the lines of the head do not join. The only noticeable change is in the orientation of the cross line, which becomes either vertical or rotated to the left. Towards the end of the 7th and in the 6th c. B.C. the lines of the head do not join anymore and in their latest form they do not even converge: they form two parallel strokes, with only the upper one cutting the cross line.

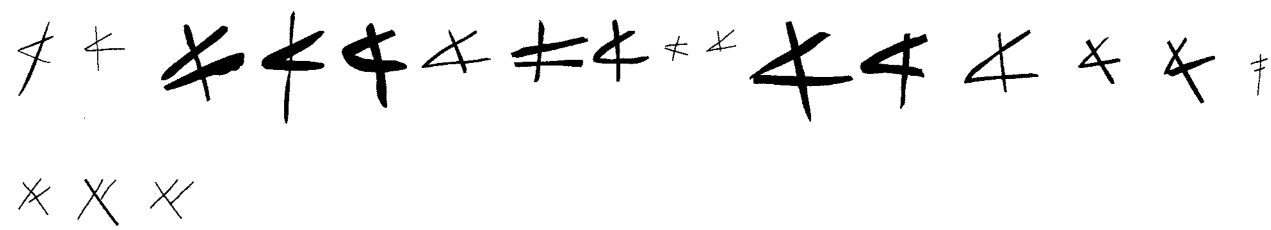


Fig. 76. Development of *aleph*.

Beth (Fig. 77)

Beth is another sign with a long life span and it is attested several times. Its earliest occurrence is in the 9th and its latest is in the 6th c. B.C. The oldest, 9th c. form of the sign is characterized by an angular head, a vertical stand, and a short tail curving at a right angle. In the 8th c. *beth* remains more or less constant with a tendency for more rounded head and tail. In the 7th c., one specific shape emerges: it consists in an angular head with an oblique tail that is directly drawn from the angle of the head. In its latest development the sign has a head consisting of converging lines, which do not join. The traditional form with a round head continues however to be used (stele 6).

1. All drawings of letters are not to scale.

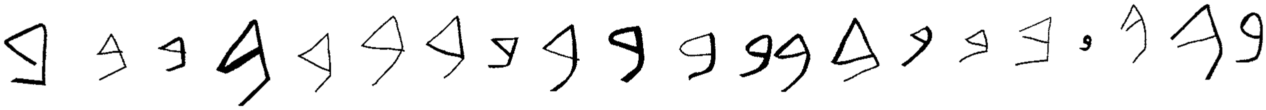


Fig. 77. Development of *beth*.

Gimmel (Fig. 78)

Gimmel is attested for the first time in the 9th c. It has a long vertical shaft and a short angular head. In the course of the 8th c. the head stroke becomes longer and the shaft shorter and they both form a round angle. In the 7th c. the angular head seems to prevail again.

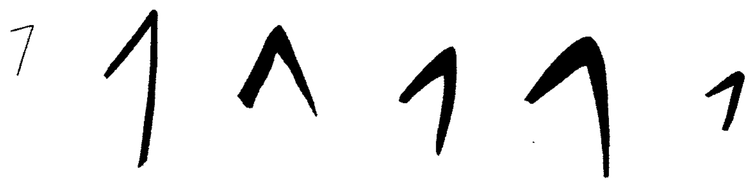


Fig. 78. Development of *gimmel*.

Daleth (Fig. 79)

This sign is attested only twice: in the 7th c. the letter has a short vertical shaft and the lines of the head converge but do not join. Towards the end of that century it is attested with an angular head but with a short rounded shaft.



Fig. 79. Development of *daleth*.

He (Fig. 80)

He is attested four times, twice in a 7th c., once in a 7th/6th c., and once in a 6th c. inscription. In the 7th c. the sign has a vertical shaft and three horizontal lines joining it. At the end of the 7th and in the 6th c., the third horizontal stroke becomes detached from the vertical shaft and drops abruptly and obliquely below the upper two horizontal lines.



Fig. 80. Development of *he*.

Zayin (Fig. 81)

Zayin is attested only twice in 7th/6th c. inscriptions. The sign has a clear Z-shape in both of them, more flattened on stele 39 than on stele 20.



Fig. 81. Development of *zayin*.

Ḥet (Fig. 82)

This sign is attested for the first time in the 8th c. where it has vertical parallel sides and three horizontal strokes. In the 7th c. it is rotated to the left.

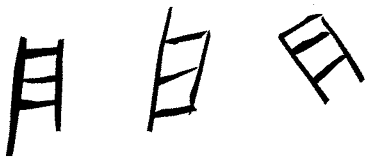


Fig. 82. Development of *ḥet*.

Ṭet (Fig. 83)

Ṭet is attested only twice: once in an 8th and once in a 7th c. B.C. inscription. In the 8th c. it has an almost horizontal oval shape with cross lines inside it. In the late 7th c. the oval form is rotated to the right with one horizontal line dividing it into two unequal halves.



Fig. 83. Development of *ṭet*.

Yod (Fig. 84)

This sign shows an interesting development from the 9th to the 6th c. B.C. From a vertical form with two parallel strokes for the head and a short tail curving at a narrow angle, the sign witnesses a progressive rotation to the left. The lines of the head remain mostly parallel. There is however one late 8th c. exception, stele 23, where the second stroke falls in the apex of the head. The latest development in the late 7th and 6th c. is related to the position of the sign, which becomes almost horizontal with a tail curving at a right angle. The latest 6th c. form has a tail drawn to the left of the shaft.



Fig. 84. Development of *yod*.

Kof (Fig. 85)

Kof is attested only twice: in an 8th c. inscription, it has a vertical shaft and, to the left of it, two slightly converging lines for the head, while in the 7th c., these two lines join together at a narrow angle.



Fig. 85. Development of *kof.*

Lamed (Fig. 86)

Lamed is attested from the 10th to the 6th c. B.C. but the sign does not undergo drastic changes before the 7th c. B.C. Its earlier form is characterized by a vertical shaft, which can also be slightly rotated to the right, and a rounded tail. Towards the end of the 7th c. the tail becomes angular and almost horizontal. Round forms continue however to be in use.

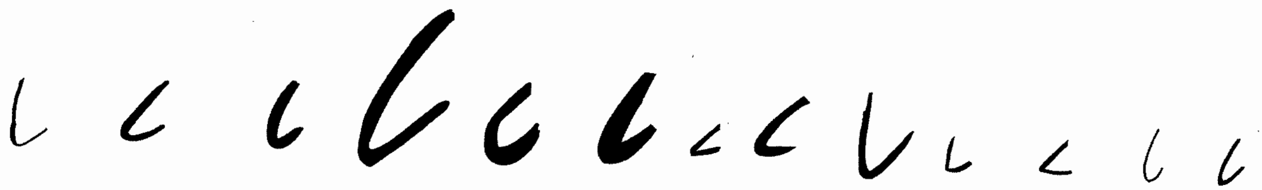


Fig. 86. Development of *lamed.*

Mem (Fig. 87)

This sign displays the widest range of shapes. It is attested from the 10th to the end of the 7th c. B.C. and occurs several times. The oldest 10th c. form is a wavy vertical line. The first development is a rotation of the sign to the left producing a wavy head and a slanting shaft. In the course of the 8th c. the sign displays a development characteristic so far of south Phoenician inscriptions of that period attested also in the inscription of the Sidonian crater published by Puech (1994): the head consists in a horizontal line with three vertical strokes and the shaft is vertical. *mem* with a wavy head continues however to be in use. The next development, which occurs in the 7th c., is the loss of one of the vertical strokes of the head: the shaft does not cross the horizontal line of the head anymore. Towards the end of the 7th c., the line of the head is cut by the middle stroke.

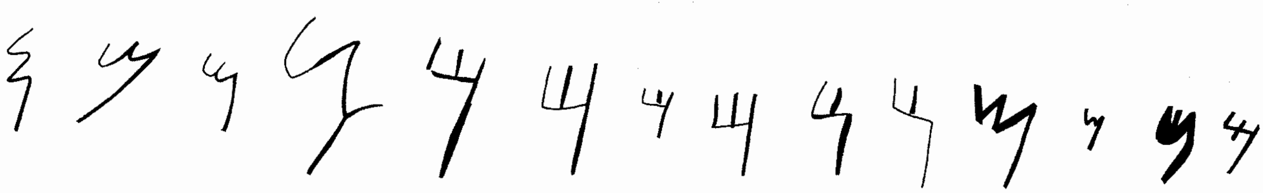


Fig. 87. Development of *mem.*

Nun (Fig. 88)

This letter is attested from the 9th to the 6th c. B.C. Its earliest forms display a short angular head and a long rounded shaft. With time, the sign starts having a broken S-shape. The odd forms on stele 8 and 36 (3rd and 6th in the row) are to be noted.

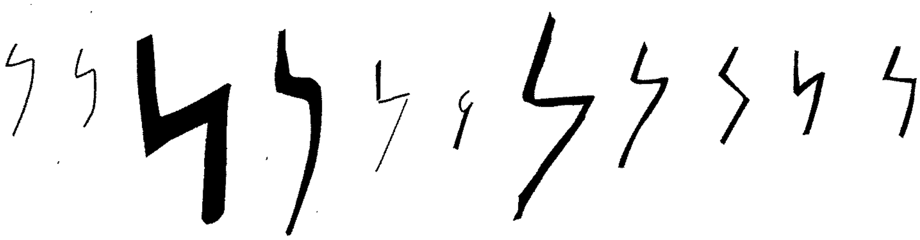


Fig. 88. Development of *nun*.

Samekh (Fig. 89)

This sign is attested three times in the 8th and 7th c. and does not undergo significant change. In the 8th c. the shaft is vertical and cuts three horizontal lines of unequal length. Later the horizontal lines tend to be of equal size and the shaft witnesses a slight rotation to the left.



Fig. 89. Development of *samekh*.

Ayin (Fig. 90)

From the 10th to the 6th c. *ayin* keeps its closed circular shape and remains unchanged.



Fig. 90. Development of *ayin*.

Pe (Fig. 91)

This sign is attested four times: in the early 9th/8th c. forms the shaft is long and rounded and the angular head consists of a short stroke. The sign develops later to have a round head and a shorter shaft.

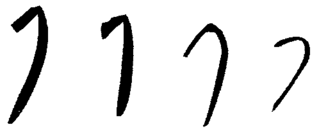


Fig. 91. Development of *pe*.

Qof (Fig. 92)

Qof is attested twice on 8th c. stelae where it displays the characteristic shape of that period: a vertical shaft cutting the round head into two equal halves.

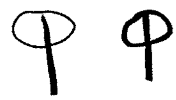


Fig. 92. Development of *qof*.

Resh (Fig. 93)

Resh is attested several times from the 9th to the 6th c. B.C. Its form does not undergo significant changes through time. From a shape with an angular head and a long vertical shaft, the sign develops a more rounded head. Another late development is a head with converging but not joining lines.

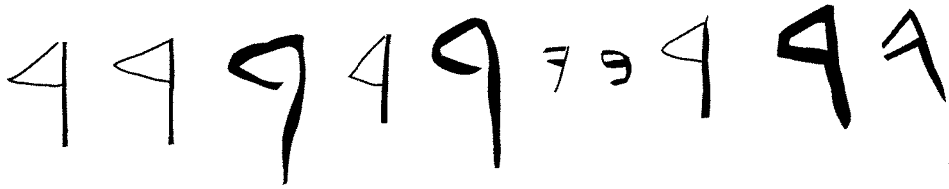


Fig. 93. Development of *resh*.

Šin (Fig. 94)

This sign is attested from the 10th to the end of the 7th c. B.C. The earliest form of the sign is a very angular and high W-shape. With time this W-shape becomes more open and flat, and in the 7th c. the sign witnesses its first significant change. It has an angular or rounded V-form, with a vertical line falling in the apex of the letter.

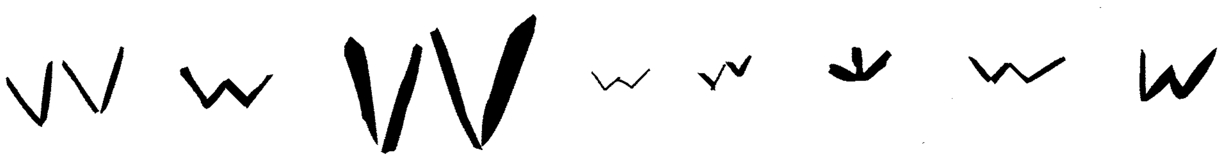


Fig. 94. Development of *šin*.

Taw (Fig. 95)

This sign is attested from the 9th to the end of the 7th c. B.C. In the 9th c. it displays two different forms: one is the vertical cross-shape with a shorter horizontal and a longer vertical line and the other is the X-shape attested on stele 7. The first form continues to be in use for several centuries and undergoes little change. Except for a slight rotation to the right, the sign remains the same but progressively looses the left side of the horizontal line. The more recent development in the late 7th c. displays a long shaft and a short horizontal stroke to the right.

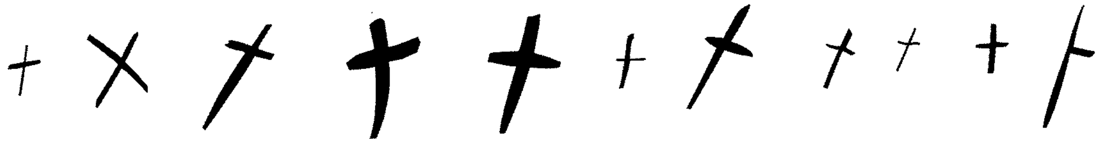


Fig. 95. Development of *taw*.

To conclude: these signs constitute a sort of reference collection, which may prove useful for students of Phoenician epigraphy since most of them are uninterruptedly attested from the 10th/9th to the 7th/6th c. B.C. The above-described development has shown that, except for some oddities, the south Phoenician script followed the well-known pattern of development of Phoenician signs in general. This conformity was tested in the dating of the inscriptions, which was almost exclusively based on palaeography. As already mentioned, the chronological range defined by palaeography did correspond to that established by the archaeological evidence for the al-Bass cemetery in Tyre.

However, some individual signs like 8th c. *mem* with the horizontal head and three perpendicular strokes, and 7th c. *beth* with a tail drawn from the angle of the triangular head, have developed characteristic local forms, which were later abandoned. The tendency of the lines of *aleph*'s head to converge without joining is also attested very early (9th/8th c.) in the Tyrian inscriptions. This characteristic will eventually lead to the later form of *aleph* with two parallel strokes for the head.

II.2 THE ONOMASTICS

II.2.a General Characteristics of the Phoenician Personal Names

Next to their epigraphic value, the funerary inscriptions contributed greatly to Phoenician onomastics since they exclusively consist of personal names. Thirty-one of the fifty attested names are mentioned here for the first time (see Table II). *mlqrt'b, ysp,* and *'m'ḥ* appear twice each and the name on stele 22 is incomplete, which reduces in fact the number of attested names to forty-six.

Concerning gender distribution, ten names can be clearly ascribed to females and thirty-four to males, a ratio of *ca* 1/3. The gender of two names, *'štrtl[']t* and *'štrt'sp,* could not be identified with certainty: they may be either male or female.

The personal name may appear either alone or preceded by the preposition *lamed.* Only nine names are attested with this preposition while the overwhelming majority is not. As already mentioned (see stele 1), parallels to the use of *lamed* before the personal name are well attested in the Akhziv inscriptions (Cross 2002: Nos 1-5). According to Cooke (1903: 60), personal names in funerary inscriptions are usually preceded by this preposition and the personal name following *l-* is understood to refer to a deceased adult. Cross also considered the absence of *lamed* before the name on his stele No 6 (Cross 2002: note 14) to be a «problem». The evidence from the funerary inscriptions, mainly that of the excavated stelae, stele 2 (Khalde) and 51 (Tyre), where the name is not preceded by *l-*, shows very clearly that the use of the preposition was not systematic and that its absence was rather the rule than the exception.

Thirty-three names (the incomplete name on stele 22 is not included) are those of the deceased for whom a stele was erected while the rest are names representing genealogical relationships. Twenty-two of the thirty-three personal names stand alone without any genealogical affiliation while seven are said to be «son of», *bn,* five are said

o be «daughter of», *bt*, and one is said to be «wife of», *ʾšt*. On stele 23, the word *bn* has most probably been omitted by the scribe (see Chapter I, stele 23) and on stele 31, the name of the grandfather is exceptionally mentioned.

For both male and female names, the genealogical affiliation normally refers to the father: PN (Deceased) *m/bt* PN (Father). There are two exceptions to this general rule: one is *btšḥr bt grtbʿl* and the second is *tnlšbʿ ʾšt ʾlm*. In the first case the genealogical affiliation of the deceased female is her mother. It is interesting to note that he only occurrence of a maternal affiliation appears in relation with a female name. The question that arises here s how to explain the use of the mother's instead of the father's name? There is of course no clear-cut answer to this juestion but if one is allowed to draw parallels from modern oriental village societies, children are usually called ifter the mother only if the latter has a very bad reputation (nobody knows who the father is so the child is named ifter the mother), or if she has an outstanding or strange personality. *grtbʿl* may have been such a person. In the se-cond case, the genealogical affiliation of the deceased female is her husband. Here again, one is maybe allowed to suggest that daughters who died before being married are called after their father while those who were married were called after their husband, as is still the case in many modern oriental societies.

Concerning the morphology of the personal names (Table II), there is an equal distribution between hypo-coristica and nominal sentence names: twenty belong to the first and nineteen to the second category. Two genti-ics, two verbal sentence names, a title name (*brh* which appears under «Miscellaneous Names» in Benz 1972: 240), a one-word name, *šbʿt*, an animal name, *klbt*, and, finally, an abbreviated name, *ʿštrtg*, are attested (for these diffe-rent categories of Phoenician names see Benz 1972: 206 ff).

Finally, all the personal names attested in these inscriptions are clearly local. The total absence of foreign na-mes is somehow unexpected in a trading harbor city like Tyre.

II.2.b The Theophorous Personal Names

Twenty-three names contain a clear theophorous element and many hypocoristica have lost theirs, which gives an overwhelming majority of names built with a divine element. This clearly indicates the popularity of theophorous names in Iron Age Phoenicia.

Twelve clearly attested gods enter in the composition of these Phoenician theophorous names. The local ma-le gods are **Baal, Eshmun, Hamon, Melqart, Sakon, Paʿam, and Maskir**. Before dealing with these divine beings individually, it is to be noted that two other local divine names, Milk and El, could also be attested in these ono-mastics.

Concerning the first, two personal names, *mlkʾ* and *mlk*, respectively a female and a male name, may be in-terpreted as hypocoristica built with the divine name «Milk». This god is attested in the Phoenician royal names Yehumilk and Yeḥimilk, kings of Byblos (*KAI* No 4 and 10). In his recent book on Phoenician gods and goddesses, Lipinski (1995: 228-229) discusses this divine being only in connection with the Tyrian god Melqart with whom he identifies him. He does not mention him in connection with the gods of Byblos. He also argues that *mlk* is a cht-honic god, maybe a deified king, attested in 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. cuneiform texts where he is equated with Mesopotamian Nergal. The above-mentioned hypocoristica may very well refer to this Semitic deity. However, as previously said, Lemaire (2001) opts in his discussion of these personal names, for the meaning «king» and inter-prets the theophorous names as «DN is king».

The second questionable local divine name concerns the theophorous element *ʾl* in the personal name *ʾlm*. As previously suggested, this name may very well be a hypocoristic formed with the divine name *ʾl*, since hypoco-ristica with *m* are attested in Phoenician (Benz 1972: 233). However, Benz seems to implicitly reject this possibility since he explains the name as a «Plural of *ʾL*, also employed as a plural of majesty for individual masculine…and the feminine deities…» (1972: 267). So the name should maybe be understood as referring to god(s) in general and not to the god El in particular.

The funerary inscriptions also attest in their onomastics foreign male gods, **Gusi, Hadad, Amon**, as well as local female goddesses, **Tanit** and **Astarte**.

The divine name Baal occurs in five different names and seems to enjoy the wider popularity. Next come Eshmun, Astarte, Tanit, and Melqart, with two occurrences each. If Milk were to be identified as a deity and to be equated with Melqart as Lipinski suggests, the main god of Tyre would be mentioned four times. As for the remai-ning gods, each of them is mentioned only once.

As expected, all the major local gods and goddesses of the southern Phoenician cities occur in the onomas-tics: Baal, the Canaanite weather-god (for a recent and thorough analysis of the origin and manifestations of this

god see Lipinski 1995: 79 ff), Eshmun, the healing city-god of Sidon (Lipinski 1995: 154 ff), Melqart, the city-god of Tyre (Bonnet 1988; Lipinski 1995: 226 ff), Astarte, the Phoenician goddess *par excellence* (Lipinski 1995: 128 ff.; Bonnet 1996), and Tanit, the popular goddess of Carthage whose oriental origin has been long since confirmed, and whom Lipinski (1995: 199ff) ascribes to the pantheon of the city of Sarepta.

The other divine beings mentioned in the onomastics of the funerary stelae do not hold prominent positions in the official pantheons of Sidon and Tyre but they were obviously very active in Phoenician popular religion and deserve closer scrutiny.

Hamon, which appears on stele12 is generally interpreted as an abbreviated form of Baal Hamon, the most popular god of Carthage, identified as Roman Saturn and Greek Kronos. Xella (1991: Chapters 3 and 4) dedicated a detailed study to the origin and meaning of the divine name *ḥmn*, which he identified as a baldaquin or shrine. Lipinski (1995: 251 ff.) ascribes Baal Hamon to the Tyrian pantheon. He strongly rejects Xella's identification and argues for Baal Hamon as the deified Amanus Mountain, an opinion shared by Niehr (1998: 160). Concerning the nature of this deity, Lipinski considers him as an agrarian god (see also Lipinski 1992a: 57-58). Whatever the meaning of the name may be, its occurrence in the composition of a local Tyrian personal name seems to confirm the god's popularity in Phoenicia.

Concerning the use of *ḥmn* in the onomastics, the question arises whether this element was used alone as a theonym or as an abbreviation of the divine name Baal Hamon as previously mentioned. Xella (1991) does not take a clear stand on the question. On page 40 he seems to favor the view that *ḥmn* stands for Baal Hamon but on page 64, he mentions the possibility that *ḥmn* alone could have been used as a theonym :»*.....on aurait une preuve que ḤMN seul avait parfois fonction de théonyme, un usage fort rare qui pourrait être rapproché des cas sporadiques déjà signalés en Orient, mais cette fois dans l'onomastique ugaritique et phénicienne*». It is again this latter option that he seems to favor in his study of Ugaritic theophorous names where *ḥmn* is explained as «elemento divinizzato» (Ribichini & Xella 1991:162). According to Halff (1963-64: 65) however, Baal Hamon appears systematically abbreviated as Baal and not as *ḥmn* in Punic onomastics. It remains thus unexplained why the same divine name Baal Hamon should be systematically abbreviated as *ḥmn* in the East and as Baal in the Punic world. The occurrence of the Phoenician name *grḥmn* on one of the Tyrian stelae, seems to favor the assumption that *ḥmn* was used as a theonym in Phoenicia.

Another local god whose name appears in the onomastics of the funerary stelae is Pa'am, whom Lipinski (1995: 215 ff.) ascribes to the pantheon of Sarepta. *p'm* is attested in Phoenician with the meaning «foot» or «time, turn» (Hoftijzer-Jongeling 1995 under $p'm_2$). Lipinski, by analogy with Hebrew and Ugaritic, considers the term to be a euphemism for «phallus» and interprets the divine name as «divine Phallus». The god Pa'am would thus be a fertility god, involved mainly in sacred marriage rituals, and represented by phallic symbols, which are attested in Phoenicia (Lipinski 1995: note 157; Seyrig 1966: 151-156, Pls. I, II). To this divine being is dedicated the votive inscription of the Wasta grotto near Sidon (Milik 1954: 11), where fertility cults in honor of Astarte used to take place as attested by the graffiti and pubic triangles incised on the walls (Beaulieu-Mouterde 1947-48: Pls IV, V, VIII and Fig.1). Lipinski's suggestion is therefore attractive and, if proven correct, would greatly contribute in the interpretation of the symbol represented on stele 10 (see Chapter III.2.h).

The god Maskir appears also once in the onomastics of the funerary stelae. It is the first clear occurrence of the god in a Phoenician personal name. Another occurrence is most probably in the Phoenician personal name, *l'mskr*, on a stele from Akhziv (Cross 2002: No.1 who prefers to interpret it as *'amas-skar'*). This god is otherwise attested in Punic (Benz 1972: 104) and Benz defines the name as that of a «Deity of uncertain origin and etymology» (p.351). Lipinski (1995: 174 ff) argues for an etymology from Phoenician *skr/zkr* «to remember» (Hoftijzer-Jongeling 1995 under *zkr*), and attributes to it the meaning «herald». He also recognizes the name of the god in the expression *ḥṭr mskr*= «Herald's Scepter» attested in Punic inscriptions (KAI 145 and 146) and suggests, though aware of the inconclusive archaeological evidence, that the Caduceus on Phoenician and Punic funerary monuments may represent the god *mskr*.

The last local deity, who occurs in the onomastics of the funerary stelae is Sakon. Lipinski (1995: 177) believes that the etymology of the name is similar to Akkadian *sikkanum* meaning the *Betyl* (Durand 1988: 5-6), which is attested as early as the third millennium B.C. According to Durand (1985: 83): «*...le sikkanum représente de façon explicite une pierre de haute taille qui, non seulement, est susceptible de recevoir un culte, mais aussi se réfère à une divinité précise*». The Semitic cult dedicated to the worship of non-iconic stones was widespread in Bronze Age Syria and widely attested in the Mari texts (Durand 1985: 79 ff). The cult of the *betyl* is also widely attested in the Canaanite religion of the Iron Age and later Greek and Roman periods (Seyrig 1974: 87 ff; Lipinski 1992b: 70-71 with relevant bibliography; Lipinski 2000: 599 ff; Mettinger 1995). The Phoenician god Sakon would be, in the light of

the Akkadian parallel, the deified *Betyl*, as suggested by Lipinski (1995: 176 ff). Mettinger (1995: 131-132) shares the same opinion:»...the designation of the stele as *sikkānum* has resulted in a theophoric element, namely *sakkō/ūn*, known for instance from «Sanchuniaton» (*sknytn*)».

There is however a major objection to this otherwise highly attractive suggestion. In the treaty of Esarhaddon and Ba'alu of Tyre (Borger 1956: 109) a god ^{d}*Ba-a-a-ti-ilî*^{meš} is mentioned. *Baatili* was identified with the deified *Betyl*, whose cult was widespread in Phoenicia (see for instance Seyrig 1974: 89 and note 6). The Phoenician, more precisely Sidonian origin of this god is argued by Milik (1967: 575) while Xella (1992: 70) denies him a Phoenician origin and ascribes him to the Syro-Mesopotamian realm. Lipinski (1995) as well, does not include him among the gods and goddesses of Phoenicia, which indicates that he implicitly denies him a place in the Phoenician pantheon.

To sum up, the identity of the god *skn* is far from clear. He has not yet been attested in Phoenician with the meaning *betyl* while *Baatili* is clearly West Semitic and represents the *betyl par excellence*. Moreover, this latter god was clearly worshipped in Phoenicia, at least during the classical period. One will have to wait for more decisive evidence to accept the equation of Sakon with Akkadian *sikkanum*, or to deny his relation with West Semitic *Baatili*. A compromise suggestion would be that of Mettinger (1995: 130) who, on the basis of analogical etymologies, accepts the existence of two divine beings representing the sacred stone: *skn* and *byt'l*, inherited from Akkadian and West Semitic tradition respectively.

Two of the three attested foreign gods in the Phoenician personal names are Aramaean: Gusi and Hadad. Hadad is the well-known Semitic weather-god, main god of the Aramaeans in general and god of the Aramaean Dynasty of Damascus in particular (For the origin and attributes of this god as well as the relevant bibliography see Niehr 1998: 154-155, 159ff; Lipinski 2000: 626 ff; For a Hadad of Lebanon see Lipinski 1995: 308).

Concerning Gusi, Liverani was the first to identify him as a divine being (see stele 15). The new evidence from Ebla and Ugarit (*ARET* IX: 37: VI, 4; 38r: III, 3; 40: III, 7; Ribichini and Xella 1991: 161) shows that *Gusi* is a very old Semitic deity who continued to be worshipped by the Aramaeans in the first millennium B.C. as attested in the dynastic name of the Aramaean kings of Arpad *Gusi and br gš* (Aramaic inscription of *ZKR*, *KAI* 202, Assyrian Annals of Assurnasirpal II, *ARI* II: 143; Shalmaneser III, *Monolith* II: 12, 27, 83). The cult of this god is well rooted in ancient West Semitic religion. The etymology of the divine name remains however, obscure.

The worship of Syrian or Aramaean gods like Gusi and Hadad in southern Phoenicia, is not surprising and can be easily explained by very early trade connections between Phoenicia and the Aramaean kingdoms of the hinterland as attested by the epigraphic material (Kestemont 1985: 135 ff; Peckham 2001: 31 ff). Indeed, the Tyrian god Melqart was worshipped by the Aramaean kings of Damascus (Breidj inscription *KAI* 201) in the 9th c. B.C. and this religious interaction was explained as the result of a political marriage between the Aramaean king and a Tyrian princess by analogy with the introduction of the Baal cult in Israel by Jezabel the Tyrian, wife of Ahab (Dearman 1983: 96). The Phoenician god Baal Hamon was worshipped in the same century by the Aramaean kings of Sam'al (*KAI* 24) who used the scribal skills of Phoenician professionals. The worship of Aramaean gods in southern Phoenicia should be explained in the same way.

Concerning the Egyptian divine name Amon, Lemaire (1986: 89-92), who collected all Egyptian divine names that occur in Phoenician onomastics, presented the evidence relevant to the occurence of Amon in Phoenician personal names (for Phoenician worship of Egyptian gods see also Lipinski 1995: 319 ff). This evidence is by no means surprising given the close trade and cultural connections that linked Egypt to the Phoenician cities in general and to Byblos in particular (Montet 1928; Ward 1971; Wagner 1980: 100 ff) and which is even more obvious in the symbols used on the stelae (see Chapter III.2). In turn, Levantine gods found their way to Egypt and infiltrated the Egyptian pantheon (Stadelmann 1967).

To conclude: the large number of Phoenician theophorous names attested in the funerary inscriptions of south Lebanon, indicate the strong religious feeling that characterized Phoenician society. The large number of deities used in theophorous names betrays considerable religious diversity. The fact that together with major city gods, minor, less prominent gods, are used in the onomastics, unveils an aspect of Phoenician religious life, which is generally overlooked by official religion. In texts reflecting official religion like the royal inscriptions, for example, only major and emblematic figures of the city pantheon are usually mentioned. The personal names, in turn, allow an insight into the popular religion of the Phoenicians, into the aspects of the sacred with which they had closer contact in their everyday life. Finally, these theophorous names clearly show that neighboring religions were successful, mainly through trade channels, in infiltrating Phoenician society and in influencing its religious behavior.

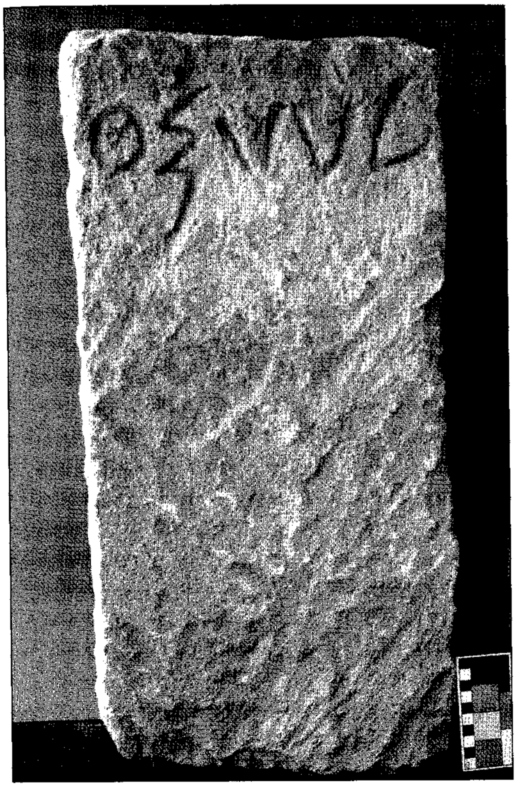
II.3 THE PUNIC PERSONAL NAMES

The Punic stelae yielded thirteen well-known male personal names, seven of which are exclusively attested in Punic onomastics (see table 3). Seven are theophorous names built with the divine elements Baal and Melqart and five are hypocoristica. These personal names underline the conservative and traditional character of Carthaginian onomastics. Although the deceased represents often the third or fourth generation of immigrants, he as well as all his predecessors bear typical Carthaginian names.

While on the Phoenician stelae the inscription consists of *l* + PN or of the name of the deceased alone, occasionally followed by one genealogical affiliation, the Punic stelae consistently use the formula *hmnṣbt z* or simply *mnṣbt* to introduce the funerary inscription. The name of the deceased is always followed by a long genealogy, which goes back to illustrious ancestors, *shofets* and *rabs*, and ends with the first immigrant to the metropolis, designated as *bn qrtḥdšt*. This insistence in using Carthaginian names and script as well as in underlining North African origins may indicate the clear desire of this community to preserve its Carthaginian identity.

The Punic inscriptions are all well written by a skilled, professional hand. This feature may be explained by the fact that all the deceased belonged to an upper class since they all claim ancestors who occupied important state positions.

The presence of Punic inscriptions in the area of Tyre does raise the question of their origin: were they written in Phoenicia or were they brought from Carthage? Although a decisive answer is not possible in the present state of the evidence, one could safely assume that funerary inscriptions of Carthaginians, residents in Tyre or envoys or merchants from Carthage, who died in the Phoenician homeland, were locally produced in Phoenicia. The evidence provided by stele 62, strengthens this assumption since *b'lšlk*, the deceased, was himself a Carthaginian scribe living in Phoenicia. The presence of Carthaginian scribes or a Carthaginian scribal school in Tyre can be very easily explained: the ancient texts, as well as the three Punic stelae 60, 61, and 62, clearly attest a Cathaginian presence in southern Phoenicia as well as uninterrupted relations between the colony and the metropolis. Gsell (1920:I, 395ff.), Bunnens (1979:285ff.), Teixidor (1986: 404) and more recently and comprehensively Ferjaoui (1986) have dealt with that subject. Since the presence of a Carthaginian «colony» in Tyre is attested and since Carthaginian envoys and merchants were regularly present there, it is normal to find Carthaginian scribes serving this community.



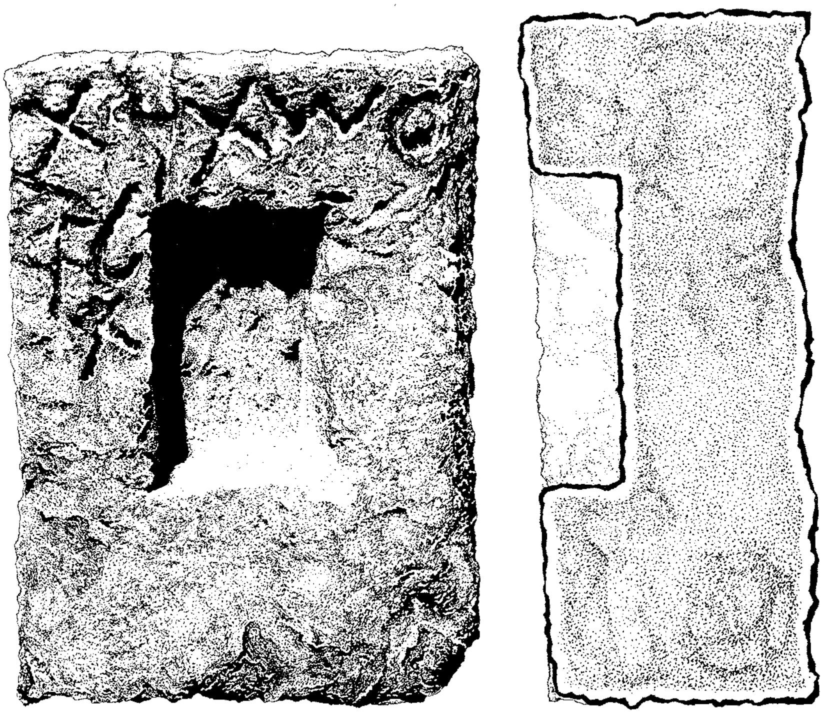
Stele 16



Stele 2



Stele 17

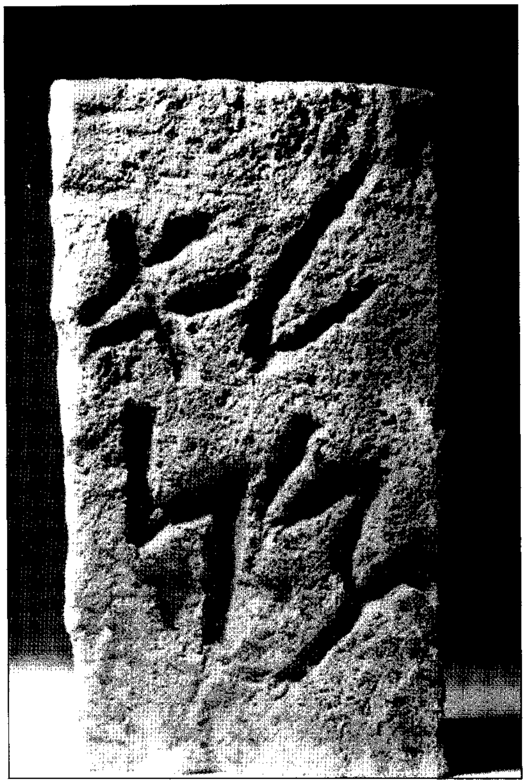


Stele 7

Fig. 96. Inscriptions dated to the 10th/9th c. B.C.



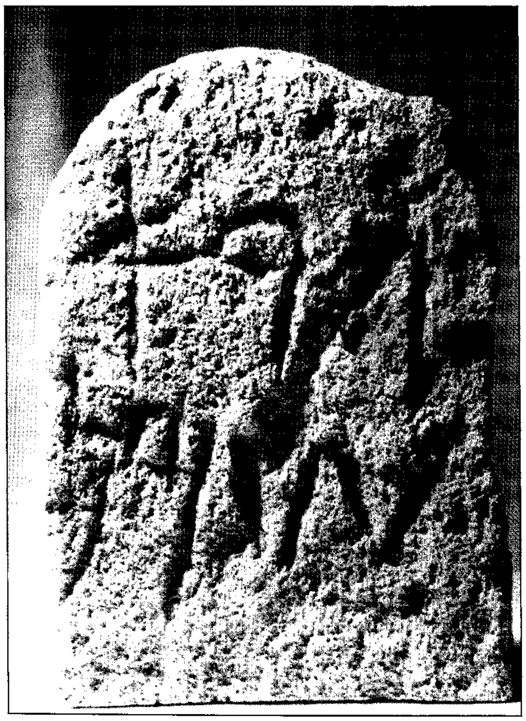
Stele 51



Stele 36

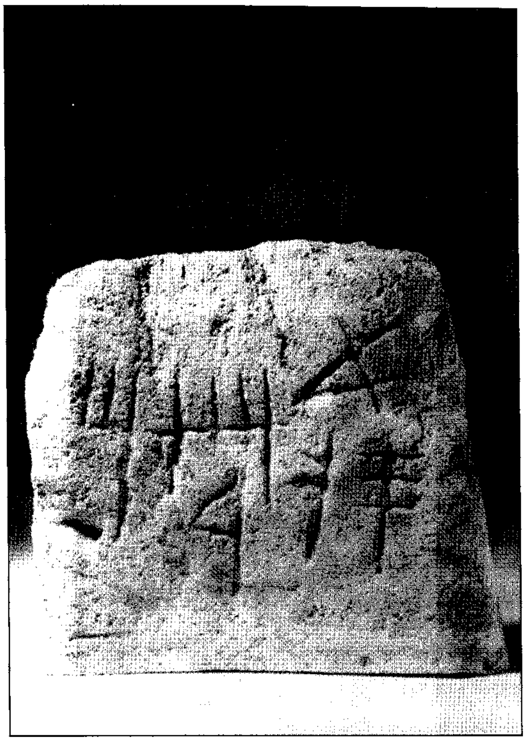


Stele 38

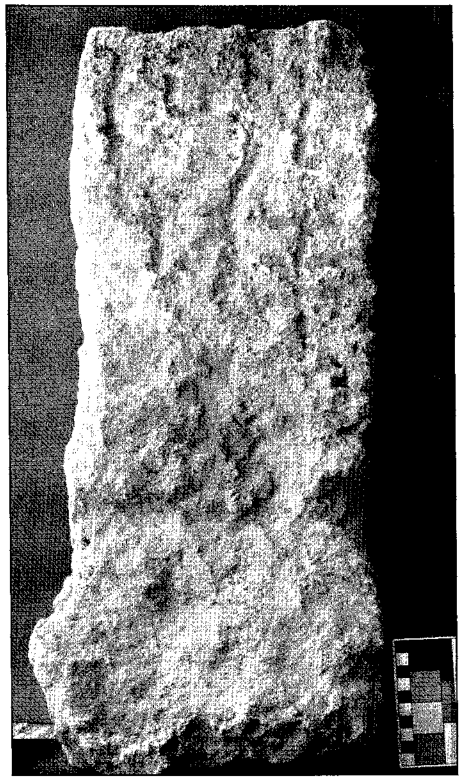


Stele 33

Fig. 97. Inscriptions dated to the 9th/8th c. B.C.



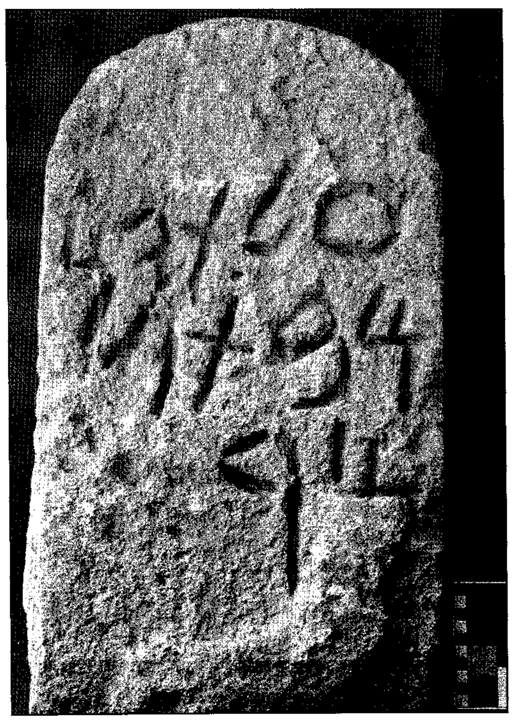
Stele 34



Stele 30



Stele 23



Stele 18

Fig. 98a. Inscriptions dated to the 8th/7th c. B.C.



Stele 21



Stele 14



Stele 8



Stele 12

Fig. 98b. Inscriptions dated $8^{th}/7^{th}$ c. B.C.



Stele 15



Stele 5



Stele 19

Fig. 99a. Inscriptions dated to the 7th c. B.C.



Stele 37

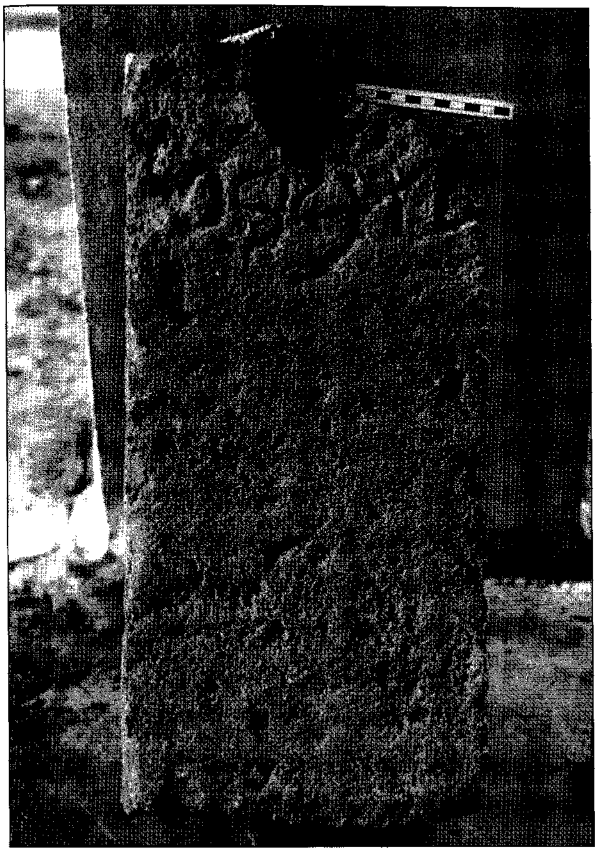


Stele 31



Stele 41

Fig. 99b. Inscriptions dated to the 7th c. B.C.



Stele 1



Stele 40



Stele 39

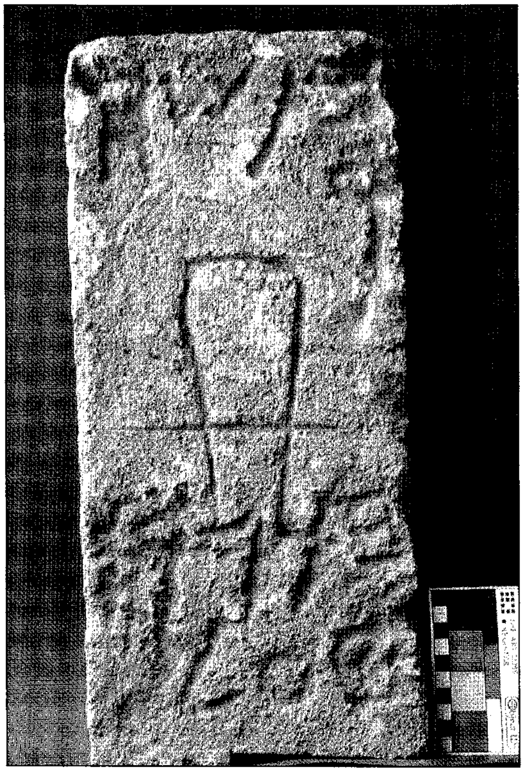


Stele 25

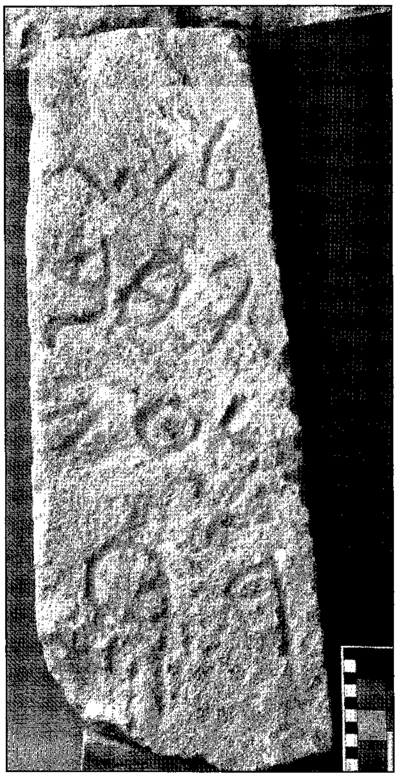


Stele 35

Fig. 100a. Inscriptions dated to the 7th/6th c. B.C.



Stele24



Stele 20

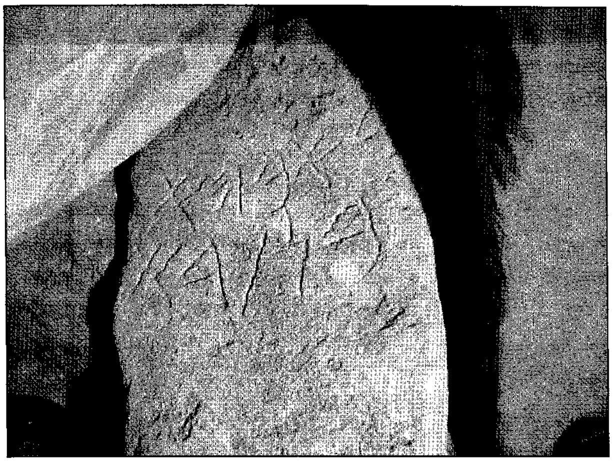


Stele 13



Stele 4

Fig. 100b. Inscriptions dated to the 7th/6th c. B.C.



Stele 3



Stele 6

Fig. 101. Inscriptions dated to the 6th c. B.C.

Table II. The Phoenician Personal Names.

Name	Gender	Preceded by *l*	First time in Ph and P	Meaning	Morphology	Divine Element
’bb‘l	Male	Yes		«(My) father is (the god) Baal»	Nominal sentence name	Baal
gtty	Male		Yes	?	Gentilic?	
’bb’	Male	Yes	Yes	«(DN) is (my) father»	Hypocoristic	
mr’	Male		Yes	«Bless o (DN)!»	Hypocoristic	
bn tnt‘l’	Male		Yes	«Son of Tanit, the Most High»	Nominal sentence name	Tanit
lb’y	Male		Yes	«(DN) is a lion»	Hypocoristic	
‘bd[xx]	Male			«Slave of (DN)»	Nominal sentence name	
b‘ly	Male			«(The god) Baal (is or does something)»	Hypocoristic	Baal
‘štrtl[’]t	Male or Female		Yes	«Astarte, the Mighty One’	Nominal sentence name	Astarte
’mtšmn	Female	Yes	Yes	«Servant of (the god) Eshmun»	Nominal sentence name	Eshmun
grḥmn	Male		Yes	«Client of (the god) *hmn*»	Nominal sentence name	Hamon
tntšb‘	Female		Yes	«(The goddess) Tanit is Abundance»	Nominal sentence name	Tanit
’lm	Male		Yes	«The gods (are or do something)»	Hypocoristic	Ilim
mlqrt’b	Male		Yes	«(The god) Melqart is (my) father»	Nominal sentence name	Melqart
grgš	Male		Yes	«Client of (the god) Gusi»	Nominal sentence name	Gusi
lšm‘	Male	Yes		««(The god) has heard»	Hypocoristic	
‘ltymm	Female		Yes	«Offering of/for the Seas/Days»	Nominal sentence name	

Table II

Name	Gender	Preceded by *l*	First time in Ph and P	Meaning	Morphology	Divine Element
gmr	Male			«(The god) is perfect»	Hypocoristic	
hd'	Male		Yes	«(The god) Hadad » (is or does something)	Hypocoristic	Hadad
špṭ	Male	Yes		«(The god) has judged or is Judge»	Hypocoristic	
'zr	Male			«(The god) has helped or is helper»	Hypocoristic	
m'ṣ'ry	Male			«The Egyptian»	Gentilic	
b'lyṭb	Male		Yes	«The god» Baal has been agreeable»	Verbal sentence name	Baal
ysp	Male			«(The god) has added»	Hypocoristic	
'my'ḥ	Male		Yes	«(The Deified) Brother is my Mother»?	Nominal sentence name	*'Aḥ?*
btšḥr	Female		Yes	«Daughter of Dawn»	Nominal sentence name	Šaḥar
grtb'l	Female			«(Female) Client of the (god) Baal	Nominal sentence name	Baal
šmny [l?]	Male	Yes	Yes	«(The God) Eshmun (is or does something»	Hypocoristic	Eshmun
'mtspr	Female		Yes	«(Female) servant of the Scribe»	Nominal sentence name	
mhry	Male		Yes	«Soldier/Servant of (the god)	Hypocoristic	
mlk	Male			«(The god) is King» or «(The god) Milk (is or does something»	Hypocoristic	Milk?
'štrtg	Male		Yes	«Astarte is (goddess of) Fortune»	Abbreviated name	Astarte

Table II

Name	**Gender**	**Preceded by *l***	**First time in Ph and P**	**Meaning**	**Morphology**	**Divine Element**
gr'šmn	Male			«Client of (the god) Eshmun»	Nominal sentence name	Eshmun
'mtmskr	Female		Yes	«(Female) servant of (the divine herald) Maskir	Nominal sentence name	Maskir
hrb	Male			«The Master»	Title or profession «Miscellaneous Name»	
l'mn	Male	Yes	Yes	«(The god Amon (is or does something)»	Hypocoristic	Amon
tm''	Male		Yes	«(The god) is Ruler or Perfection»	Hypocoristic	
grt'	Female		Yes	«(Female) Client of (the god)»	Hypocoristic	
šb't	Female		Yes	«Plenitude, Abundance»	One-word name	
'zb'l	Male			«(The god) Baal is (my) Strength»	Nominal sentence name	Baal
mlk'	Female	Yes	Yes	«(The god) is King» or «(The god) Milk (is or does something»	Hypocoristic	Milk?
pdn	Male		Yes	«(The god) has redeemed»	Hypocoristic	
klbt	Female	Yes	Yes	«She-dog»	Animal name	
'bdskn	Male			«Slave of (the god) Sakon»	Nominal sentence name	Sakon
'štrt'sp	Male or female		Yes	«(The goddess) Astarte has assembled»	Verbal sentence name	Astarte
'bdp'm	Male			«Slave of (the god) Paam»	Nominal sentence name	Pa'am

Table II

Name	Gender	Preceded by *l*	First time in Ph and P	Meaning	Morphology	Divine Element
ʿn'	Male		Yes	«(The god) has answered» or «Eye of (the god)»	Hypocoristic	

Table III. The Punic Personal Names.

Name	Gender	Attested only in Punic	Meaning	Morphology	Divine Element
špṭ	M		(DN) has judged or is Judge	Hypocoristic	
ḥnbʿl	M	x	(The god) Baal has favored or Favor of (the god) Baal.	Verbal or nominal sentence name	Baal
mlqrtḥlṣ	M	x	(The god) Melqart has saved	Verbal sentence name	Melqart
ʿzrbʿl	M		(The god) Baal has heped or (the god) Baal is help	Verbal or nominal sentence name	Baal
ḥn'	M	x	(DN) has favored or Favor of (DN)	Hypocoristic	
'dnbʿl	M		(My) lord is (the god) Baal	Nominal sentence name	Baal
yʿmṣ	M	x	?	Hypocoristic	
gr'	M		Client of (DN)	Hypocoristic	
ʿbdmlqrt	M		Slave/servant of Melqart	Nominal sentence name	Melqart
ʿbd'	M		Slave/servant of (DN)	Hypocoristic	
bʿlšlk	M	x	(The god) Baal has provided	Verbal sentence name	Baal
bʿlḥlṣ	M	x	(The god) Baal has saved	Verbal sentence name	Baal
gry	M	x	Client of (DN)	Hypocoristic	

Table IV. The Development of the Phoenician Signs.



CHAPTER III: THE SYMBOLS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

III.1 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Twenty- nine of the Iron Age Common stelae are engraved with symbols and all the Persian period tombstones represent shrines strongly influenced by Egyptian *naiskoi*. Some stelae bear more than one symbol: a combination of two (12,14, 28, 44), three (12, 26, 27), and more (stele 53-59) is attested.

The execution of all symbols is characterized by poor workmanship and lack of professional and artistic skills. The various representations are all very crude and the represented items are often simplified beyond recognition. With a few exceptions, they are simple incisions produced by cutting tools with a pointed edge.

There is no general rule as to where the symbol was placed on a stele. On the inscribed tombstones the symbol may be placed above (stele 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 25) or below (17, 20, 32, 35, 38, 42) the name of the deceased. In one instance (stele 24), part of the inscription is above while the rest is below the motif. In another (stele 32), the inscription is placed between two symbols, one above and one below it. On the uninscribed stelae, the symbol is differently situated: it may occupy the whole front side of the stone (stele 10, 11, 28, 44, 45) or it may be restricted to its upper part (stele 6, 27). In most cases however, the stelae were sawn making it difficult to determine the location of the motif.

Different symbols were identified on the stelae: some represent astral bodies, like the sun-disc and the crescent moon, some plants like the palmette, the pomegranate and the lotus, some human figures, some geometric motifs like triangles, and crosses, some Egyptian hieroglyphs, and finally some architectural motifs like the shrine.

With a few exceptions the identification of the symbols remains questionable. Except for clear Egyptian motifs, scholars remain divided on the identification and meaning of almost all symbols. Even in case of a correct identification of the represented item, the meaning often escapes us. This is a major problem that is mainly due to the total lack of Phoenician religious texts and to the limited number of Phoenician funerary monuments.

Next to local oriental symbols, the iconography of the Phoenician stelae borrowed mainly, if not exclusively, from Egyptian religious motifs: winged sun-disc, *uraei*, hieroglyphic signs as well as architectural elements are attested. Hölbl (1989: 324-325) looked into the way Phoenicians used Egyptian motifs and concluded that they understood very well the meaning and use of the items they borrowed. They were also clearly aware of their religious content and used them as such. In some instances, they used them for mere decoration and in a way different from that in which Egyptians used them. They combined them with local Canaanite symbols, in accordance with their own beliefs and needs: « *Der Phöniker kopiert die ägyptischen Ikonographien so gut er kann und solange er sie inhaltlich mit seinen Vorstellungen in Einklang bringen vermag. Er scheut sich jedoch nicht, die ägyptischen Motive untereinander und mit asiatischen selbständig zu kombinieren*» (Hölbl 1989: 325).

The study of Phoenician funerary symbols has been conditioned and often hindered by the haphazard of archaeological discovery: while the Punic world, mainly Carthage, Sicily, and Sardinia was yielding thousands of stelae carved with various motifs (for a recent summary of this material and the related bibliography see Tore 1995:

Chapters 17c and 17d), the Phoenician motherland had hardly anything to offer to study the origin, transmission, and development of their iconography, leaving the history of the symbols and their interpretation relatively in the dark.

To compensate for the limited evidence from Phoenicia, one has sometimes to question its Mediterranean settlements. The Punic stelae found in the funerary contexts of cemeteries and *tophets* have yielded a wealth of symbols, which have been discussed in various publications. Brown gave in her up-dated Ph.D. dissertation (1991) the latest results of scholarly research dealing with the subject as well as an exhaustive bibliographical list related to the various theories concerning the origin and interpretation of Punic symbols. Lipinski (1995: 206-215) summed up the latest evidence on the origin of the sign of Tanit.

In recent years, the publication of various studies dealing mainly with Phoenician and Palestinian glyptic and other small finds (Markoe 1985; Bordreuil 1986; Gubel 1987; Keel and Uelinger 1992, 1994; Sass-Uehlinger 1993; Nunn 2000; Uehlinger 2000; Gubel 2002), as well as publications investigating Egyptian borrowings in Phoenician art (Wagner 1980; Hölbl 1986 and 1989) have substantially improved our knowledge and understanding of some recurring Phoenician symbols.

In this chapter symbols appearing on the stelae will be identified and interpreted, when possible, in the light of local Canaanite traditions, which may prove more useful for understanding their origin and meaning. When possible, the contribution of Phoenician iconography to the development of later Punic symbols will be underlined.

III.2 THE SYMBOLS: IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION

III.2.a The disc, the winged disc, the disc flanked by uraei (Fig. 102)

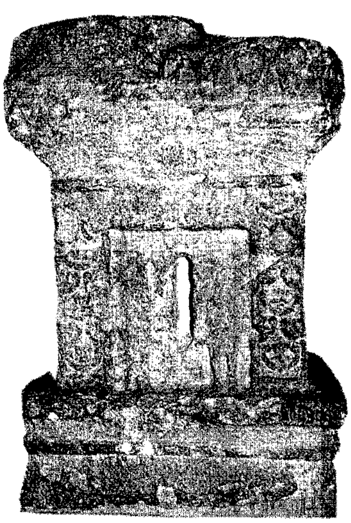
A symbol representing a simple circle or disc appears on the Common stelae. It is represented either alone (stele 5, 10, 25, 32?), associated with the crescent moon (12, 14, 27) or with other symbols like the cross and *ankh* signs (stele 26). This disc is one of the most widespread symbols in Near Eastern iconography and it is widely believed to represent the sun. In the Persian period, the simple disc that appears on the standard stelae changes drastically and adopts clear Egyptian features: it is represented winged or flanked by *uraei.*

In Egyptian religion the sun played a very important role as symbol of regeneration and rebirth and the deceased identified him/herself with the sun in order to be regenerated with him in the netherworld (Watson 1991: 166 ff). The meaning of the sun-disc on funerary stelae could have been borrowed from Egyptian religion to symbolize regeneration. The sun disc is sometimes flanked by *uraei*. The *uraeus* accompanied the sun god in the underworld and had a clear protective function because it was believed to spit fire at the enemies (Watson 1991: 167).

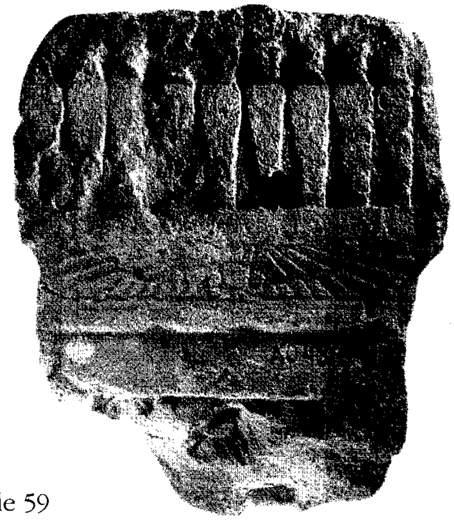
Wagner (1980: 166ff) and more recently Parayre (1990: 269 ff), dealt with the meaning of the borrowed Egyptian sun-disc. Wagner raised the issue of its use by the Phoenicians: did it have a symbolic religious value identical to the one it had in Egypt or was it simply used as a decorative element? After a review of the literature on the subject, which however mainly deals with the classical period, he concluded that both the winged sun-disc and the one flanked by *uraei* represent the Sun-god:» *Auch die folgenden Beispiele machen deutlich, dass es sich bei der geflügelten bzw. Flügellosen Sonnenscheibe um ein Symbol des Sonnengottes handelt...»* (Wagner 1980: 166). However, Wagner also noted that in some instances the disc with *uraei* might represent other gods (see also Wilkinson 1992: 109), and the winged sun-disc might have a general cosmic, more specifically protective value.

Parayre (1990: 293), who studied the winged sun-disc symbol in West Semitic glyptic, concluded that it underwent several changes and had different, successive values: from a royal image it developed an apotropaic function and ended up as a mere decorative element.

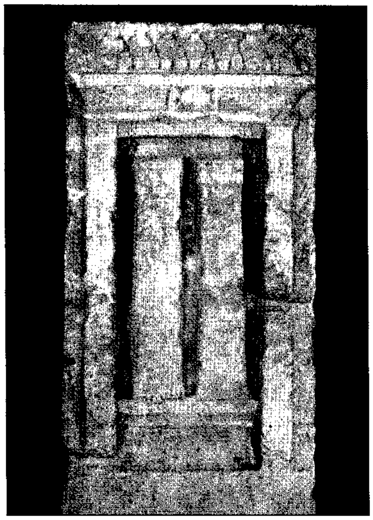
Finally, Keel and Uehlinger (1992: 294) noted that the winged sun-disc is a very common symbol in Phoenician glyptic and they underlined the cosmic and protective meaning of the wings: »*Die Flügel dürften ebenso sehr eine uranische wie eine schützende Konnotation haben. In Kombination mit dem Sonnengott bezeugen sie eine geheimnissvolle Verbindung von unnahbarer Ferne und wirksamem Schutz*» (1992: 282). They also strongly objected to the opinion that these symbols had a mere decorative purpose and carried no religious connotation. They fully agree with Hölbl (1989) that the Phoenicians were familiar with Egyptian culture and understood its religious content perfectly well.



Stele 58



Stele 59



Stele 54



Stele 55

Fig. 102 *Naiskoi* with winged sun-disc and sun-disc flanked by *uraei*

III.2.b The Crescent-disc (Fig. 103)

The crescent appears on the stelae only in connection with the disc (except maybe on stele 32) and this is the reason why both symbols are discussed together. Crescent moon symbols are widely attested alone in Levantine iconography in general. Keel (1994: 135 ff and Figs. 1-102) and Theuer (2000) collected the evidence related to the Moon-god symbol in both Mesopotamia and Canaan and showed that the god appears overwhelmingly as a crescent, rarely as a lunar disc, and sometimes as a crescent and full moon together. The crescent moon alone appears also in Phoenician glyptic (Bordreuil 1986: No 4) but is not so far clearly attested on Phoenician funerary stelae.

The association of the disc with the crescent moon in both Phoenicia and the Punic world is so common, that scholars coined a new name for the symbol these two motifs form together: the «disc-crescent» or «crescent-disc» symbol. Disc and crescent always appear in an almost invariable association, which is that found on the stelae under discussion: the crescent is inverted and encompasses the disc. While the stelae seem to have made use exclusively of this characteristic representation of the crescent-disc motif, Phoenician and Palestinian glyptic (Bordreuil 1986: No 8, 28; Keel and Uehlinger 1992: Figs 292, 319) and Israelite shrine models (Bretschneider 1991: Pl. 94) attest another asso-

ciation of these astral symbols whereby the crescent is placed below the disc. This seems to follow an old oriental tradition in the representation of these heavenly bodies, which is attested as early as the Late Bronze Age in Syria and Palestine. Evidence for this same symbol is provided by Mitanni seals (Mayer-Opificius 1984: 221: 18, 219: 22, 215: 28) and by the famous stele of Hazor representing the moon crescent below the disc above two raised hands (Bisi 1967: Fig. 1; see also Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 58). This evidence confirms the oriental roots of the crescent-disc symbol.

The representation of the inverted crescent encompassing the disc seems to be predominant only in the Phoenician-Punic world as attested not only by the evidence of the stelae but also by that of 6th c. B.C. Cypro-Phoenician shrine models (Bretschneider 1991: Pls. 99-102), by a Cypriot column capital (Perrot-Chipiez 1885: 116, Fig.53), by a Cypriot gold strip from Amathus (Barnett 1975: Fig. 43), by the relief depicted on the lid of a stone sarcophagus found in a tomb at Cheikh Zenad in North Lebanon (Brossé 1926: 195 and Pl.39: 2), which may date to the Persian period, and finally by the Sarafand statue (Ronzevalle 1932: Pl. X: 13).

The identification of these symbols in Phoenician and Punic iconography was first discussed in the context of the recurring disc-crescent symbol on Punic stelae. Both the identification and the interpretation of the symbols were influenced by the fact that the Punic stelae on which the symbols occur were discovered in their overwhelming majority in *tophets* and most of them bore a dedication to Tanit and Baal Hamon.

With the exception of Gsell (1920: 262) who interpreted these two symbols as two phases of the moon, all other scholars agree to see in them the moon crescent and the solar disc (Dussaud 1903: 125; Hours-Miédan 1950: 37; Picard 1954: 78). Gsell saw the origin of the motif in what he called *lumière cendrée*, that is the symbol representing the crescent within a full moon as depicted on Assyrian stelae representing the Moon-god (Black and Green 1992: Fig. 47), and Aramaean stelae and seals (Seidl 2000: Fig. 5b; Bordreuil 1986: Nos 123, 124). Keel and Uehlinger (1992: 340 ff) also interpreted the disc that appears in association with the crescent moon in Canaanite and Israelite glyptic as the full moon or lunar disc. While the disc alone is almost unanimously identified as the sun, the disc associated with the crescent moon may be differently interpreted as the sun or the moon, a difference, which has a clear bearing on the understanding of the symbol.

The meaning of the crescent-disc symbol was first discussed only in connection with the Punic stelae. No consensus was reached: some scholars, like Dussaud (1903: 125) and Yadin (1970: 216 ff but compare Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 58 for the evidence from Hazor), think that the moon represents Tanit and the solar disc Baal Hamon. This interpretation is obviously linked to the fact that the stelae on which the symbol appears bear a dedication to these two gods. Others like Picard (1976: 82) believe that these elements symbolize immortality. In her recent survey of the related literature, Brown (1986: 136-137) did not take a stand on the issue and pointed out that this combined symbol «... *is the least likely to be interpreted securely since its presumably astral symbolism was simply too widespread among too many different ancient peoples to whom it signified a wide variety of concepts*».

In their Phoenician context, these symbols are more difficult to interpret for absence of relevant texts. While in Mesopotamia and Syria the crescent has been generally identified as the Moon-god Sin and the disc as the Sun-god Shamash, little has been said about their association with divine beings in the Phoenician world. The Sun-god Shamash in Phoenicia is attested only in personal names while some inscriptions refer to his cult in Carthage (Lipinski 1995: 264 ff). The same meager evidence is related to the moon-god. No Phoenician name for the moon-god is attested (Theuer 2000: 309-310). Shaggar, the old Syrian Moon-god, *ks'*, «Full moon», and the Semitic moon-god *yrḫ* are attested only in Phoenician and Punic personal names (Lipinski 1995: 352; Theuer 2000: 312). Theuer (2000: 316) refutes the identification of Baal Hamon with the Moon-god. Since the attributes of Sun- and Moon-god are unknown in Phoenicia, it is difficult to decide whether the astral symbols represented on funerary stelae refer to the divine beings themselves or to other unidentified cosmic forces. Xella (1991: 109) opts for the latter alternative.

One option for the interpretation of the crescent-disc in Phoenicia is to give it the same meaning as the one it is generally assumed to have had in Carthage, i-e symbol of Tanit and Baal Hamon, the assumption being that these two gods played the same prominent role in the funerary cult of Phoenicia as well. This interpretation, which is still highly contested in the Punic world, needs direct and more serious evidence from the motherland to gain some credibility (Theuer 2000: 314 ff).

Another suggestion is to see in this combined symbol the great goddess Astarte (Brossé 1926: 196; Ronzevalle 1932: 57 with references). This identification was recently strengthened by the iconography of an Israelite seal from Lachish (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 369 ff and Fig. 319) on which the crescent-disc symbol appears together with a dove, the animal symbol of Astarte. This association may suggest the connection of the symbol with this major goddess and it may represent her.

Years of debate and of contradicting opinions have not helped solve the problem of the interpretation of the crescent-disc symbol. One is seriously led to wonder whether Ronzevalle's judicious reflection on the subject some



Stele 14



Stele 5



Stele 27



Stele 12

Fig. 103. Sun-disc and crescent-disc symbols.

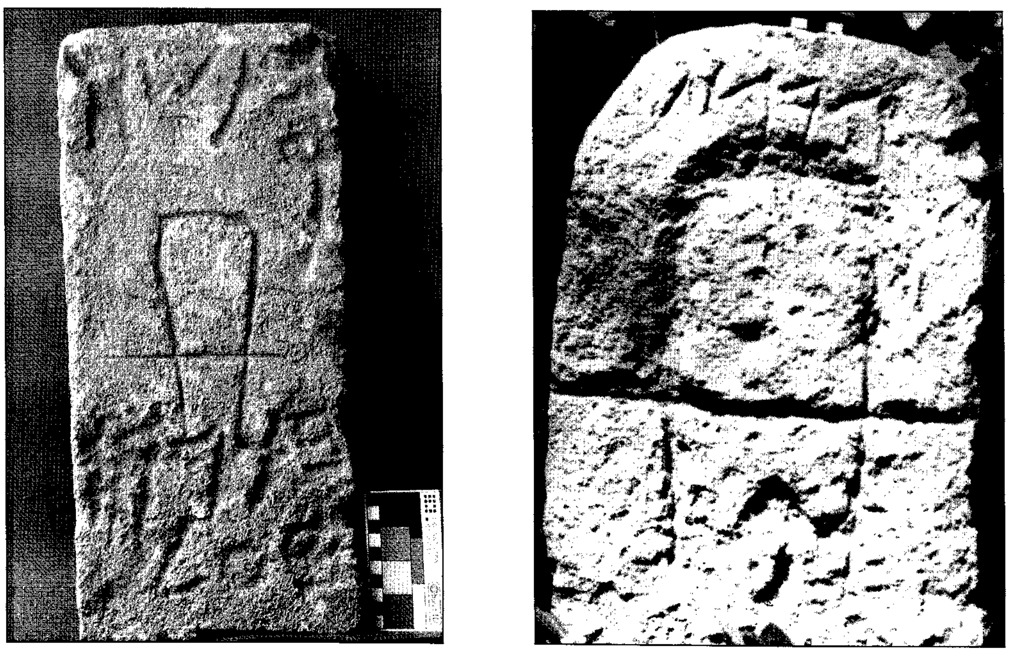
seventy years ago was not closer to the truth than any of the above-mentioned theories. The French scholar (1932: 58) totally rejected any connection with a specific deity and strongly believed that the inverted crescent moon over a disc, so typical of Phoenician and Punic stelae, represents simply heavens:» *En réalité, ce symbole...signifie ciel en général, non seulement par la réunion de deux grands astres, le Soleil et la Lune, mais encore par la position même du croissant, qui y joue à la fois le rôle de l'astre de la nuit et celui de la voûte céleste.»*

III.2.c The hemispherical, the U-shaped, and pillar-shaped betyls

The hemispherical symbol (Fig. 104)

Two stelae, 15 and 24, bear an incised hemispherical form, which is cut by a horizontal line. The nature of this symbol is *a priori* difficult to determine. Similar representations of massive objects have been usually identified as *betyls* (Bisi 1967: 60-61; see also stele 15). The symbol under discussion is very similar to the stelae with rounded upper edges, which are depicted on Tyrian coins (Will 1952-53: Fig. 1). They were differently interpreted as «pierres ambrosiennes», ambrosial rocks, (Milik 1967: 572 and note 1; see also Bonnet-Lipinski 1992a: 26) or as pillars of the Melqart temple (Will 1952-53: 8; Gubel 1992: 431). Mettinger (1995: 98) suggests that they are the «aniconic iconography» of the god Melqart. The hieroglyphic sign «hobble for cattle» (Gardiner 1957) used as determinative for palanquin or portable shrine, may also be drawn here for comparison. This hieroglyphic sign is also identical to one of the Tanit symbols, which appear on Punic stelae (Bisi 1967: Fig. 7n). The closest parallels to this symbol come from Carthage where such hemispherical *betyls* are attested standing on Egyptian bases (Fig. 105) (Brown 1986: Fig.45, *dd*). Other parallels are attested in Petra where the hemispherical stone is standing on an altar or podium called *mwtb* (Mettinger 1995: 63-64, Fig. 3.6.)

The identification of the symbol with a *betyl* on the above-mentioned stelae is highly plausible but it is made difficult by the fact that the hemispherical object, which supposedly represents the sacred stone, continues below the horizontal line that cuts it. This feature (horizontal surface resting on two legs) has been explained as an altar (or a base) on which the *betyl* was placed (Bisi 1967: 61). The fact that the «altar's» feet or sides are drawn as prolongation of the «*betyl*'s» sides may be ascribed to the stonecutter's lack of artistic skills.



Stele 24

Stele 15

Fig. 104. Hemispherical symbols.

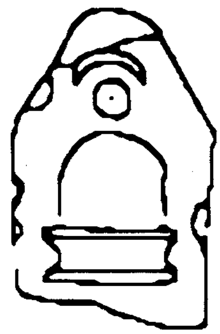


Fig. 105. A parallel to hemispherical *betyls* on podium from Carthage (Brown 1986: Fig. 45 *dd*).

In the East, *betyls* are attested mainly on thrones, podiums, or inside portable shrines. In the West too there is evidence for round or hemispherical *betyls* placed on thrones (see for ex. Bisi 1967: Pl. X, 2). The symbol on stelae 15 and 24 could represent a *betyl* placed on a simplified representation of a podium, altar, throne or palanquin. *Betyls* placed in so-called Astarte thrones are depicted on Sidonian coins of the Persian and later Classical period as well as on stone models of such thrones (Seyrig 1966: 22ff; For a review of the evidence related to thrones and *betyls* in Phoenicia, see Mettinger 1995: 100-108; see also the evidence from stelae 58 and 59). There is also ample evidence that these *betyls* were carried inside portable shrines during religious ceremonies. In his description of the Sidonian coins, Ronzevalle observed that (1932: 52 and Pl. VIII-X):» *Les poutres ...qui se projettent en avant de la caisse du char, indiquent que le baldaquin avec son contenu était mobile et pouvait être transporté à bras d'homme*», and Soyez[1] (1972: 156) agreed with this interpretation:» *...des bronzes....montrent le même «bétyle», transporté cette fois dans un édicule processionel...*». Milik (1967: 570) explained that *betyls* were essentially transportable stones because of their origin as meteors. He refers to this characteristic as «*automotion miraculeuse*» and «*mobilité liturgique*».

To sum up: the symbol under discussion may represent the sacred *betyl* on a piece of furniture or architectural element.

The U-shaped symbol (Fig. 106)

The widespread cult of the *betyl* was probably represented in yet another symbol that occurs on stele 28, 29, and 35. It consists of a U-shaped, very deep incision in the stone, which resulted in the creation of an ovoid protuberance inside it. It appears twice alone (stele 29, 35) and once with the cross motif (stele 28). Only one parallel is known from a Carthaginian stele where it is represented between a hammer and a nail. Brown (1986: 268) describes it as a tool. In spite of their identical general shape, the U-shaped symbol of the funerary stelae from Lebanon seems to represent a different item because the emphasis is on the resulting protuberance within the U-shaped incision and not on the latter.

The clue to its identification as a *betyl* was suggested by Seyrig's observation of one of the Sidonian Astarte thrones he was able to study: «*Sur un des trônes votifs de Sidon , le siège est façonné de manière à former une cavité en U, ouverte vers le haut, exactement comme pour contenir un globe...*» (Seyrig 1966: 24). On some others, he observed that there were holes, which were meant to fix such an object. This is also the case of stele 58 and 59 which had a *betyl* inserted on the back of the seat. Seyrig identified the object placed in the U-shaped cavity as a *betyl*, which, as previously explained, was removed and carried during religious ceremonies: «*En certaines occasions, on extrayait le bétyle pour le conduire en procession sur une litière*» (1966: 25; see also description of throne No 4 on the same page). The U-shaped motif on the stelae most probably symbolizes such a «movable» *betyl*.

1. Soyez believes that the object depicted on the Sidonian coins is a stone vase and not a *betyl*. Her suggestion is based on the archaeological evidence from Bustan esh-Sheikh where such plain stone vessels were found. This evidence however does not rule out the fact that *betyls* are also depicted as round, hemispherical, and rectangular stones and attested on Astarte thrones.



Stele 28



Stele 29



Stele 35



Stele 54

Fig. 106. U-Shaped and pillar-shaped symbols.

The pillar-shaped symbol (Fig. 106)

Betyls are also clearly represented on stele 54 where they form a group of two sacred rectangular stones placed inside an Egyptian type of shrine, a so-called *naiskos*. They stand on an Egyptian type of podium. They have many exact parallels on Punic stelae where according to Bisi (1967: 60-61):» *Le immagini più diffuse sulle stele a edicola egittizante sono I betili..., i quali appaiono in guisa di pilastri...rettangolari, semplici o doppi o tripli...»*.

It is certainly not surprising to find an overwhelming number of symbols representing one of the oldest and of the most popular aspects of local Phoenician religion. *Betyls* were indeed widespread in ancient Near Eastern, mainly Canaanite religion and their cult is attested since the 3rd millennium B.C. in Syria (Durand 1988: 5-6). As already mentioned in Chapter II, the *Betyl* is attested in Akkadian texts where it is called *sikkanum*. According to Durand (1985: 83): «...*le sikkanum représente de façon explicite une pierre de haute taille qui, non seulement, est susceptible de recevoir un culte, mais aussi se réfère à une divinité précise*». Lipinski (1992b: 70) defines it as «...*une pierre dressée, une stèle, une idole, un bloc ou table de pierre, de formes et dimensions diverses...qui localise la présence divine et marque l'emplacement d'un lieu saint*». He also underlines the fact that these stones were never worshipped for their own sake but only as manifestation of divine presence.

The Semitic cult dedicated to the worship of non-iconic stones was already widespread in Bronze Age Syria and is widely attested in the Mari texts (Durand 1985: 79 ff). The cult of the *betyl* also flourished in Iron Age as well as in later Greek and Roman Syria/Palestine (Seyrig 1974: 87 ff; Lipinski 1992b: 70-71 with relevant bibliography; Lipinski 2000: 599 ff).

Betyls are also archaeologically attested. The oldest archaeological evidence for a *betyl* is the conical stone discovered by Parrot in the courtyard of the Early Dynastic Ninni-Zaza temple in Mari (Parrot 1967: 25 and Figs 18, 19 and Pl. III). Second millennium evidence for the worship of standing stones comes from the so-called Obelisk temple in Byblos (Dunand 1963: 51-52). Wagner (1980: 116) underlined the local religious nature of these standing stones, which borrowed their external shape from Egyptian obelisks but which were worshipped as *betyls* or cultic stones. Another evidence for the *betyl* cult comes from Middle Bronze Age Gezer, Tell Kittan, and Megiddo where standing stones have been also found (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 37-39 with related bibliography and Figs. 22 and 26a). Finally the Late Bronze Age temple in Hazor (Yadin 1958: Pls. XXIX: 1-3; XXX: 1) yielded similar stones.

During the Iron Age *betyls* are mentioned as *maṣṣeboth* in the Bible and a god *Baatili* is listed among the gods protecting the treaty of Asarhaddon and Ba'alu of Tyre (Borger 1956: 109; see also Chapter II under Sakon). In the Greco-Roman period, this god continued to be worshipped as *Baitylos* (Seyrig 1974) and the *betyl* cult witnessed a wide popularity as attested by the famous black stone cult of Emesa and the representation of the *betyl* in a temple of Byblos on coins of the Roman emperor Macrinus (Soyez 1972: Pl. I; Lipinski 1992b). Mettinger (1995: 95 ff) correctly underlined the absence of «canonical» anthropomorphic iconography of the main Phoenician gods Melqart and Eshmun, and suggested that they were represented as aniconic stones or stelae. This explains the wide popularity that *betyls* and empty thrones enjoyed in Phoenician iconography.

Finally, it is important to stress in this context that in the Punic world, *betyls* form by far the largest category of symbols represented on the stelae. According to Mettinger (1995: 82), «...on these Punic stelae, the motif that enjoyed special favor and is attested throughout the entire historical spectrum of Punic art is that of one or more pillars/betyls». They were called *nessibim* and they are attested under various forms: « *Le nesib peut avoir d'autres formes que celles de l'obélisque. Au tophet on en voit de sphériques ou d'ovoïdes, d'autres en forme de triangle ou de losange*» (Picard 1954: 75). This diversity applies to the representation of the *betyl* in Phoenicia. In the Punic world *betyls* were uninterruptedly represented on stelae from the 6th c. B.C. to the fall of Carthage (Bisi 1967: 219).

III.2.d Egyptian hieroglyphic signs: pseudo-ankh, ankh, and nfr symbols

The pseudo- or *ankh*-related signs: *ankh*, s3, or *betyls*? (Fig. 109)

The above-mentioned evidence concerning the representation of globular or hemispherical *betyls* on podiums, Astarte thrones, and/or portable shrines provides a clue for a better understanding of the symbols represented on stele 32, 42, and 44.

On stele 32, the depicted symbol consists of a globe placed on an object represented by a horizontal line resting on an inverted V-shaped stand. As in the case of the hemispherical symbols, the inverted V-shaped base is the continuation of the globe line. Inside the circular head is a pomegranate.

On stele 42, the same symbol is depicted with however, a slight variation: instead of a globe, a hemispherical object rests on a horizontal line. The «legs» are two oblique lines but they do not join as in the previous example.

Finally, the symbol on stele 44 represents clearly a globular object, which is placed above a horizontal line resting on two vertical, parallel lines.

All three symbols are obviously variants of the same representation. The symbols on stele 32, 42, and 44, do not appear here for the first time and wherever they were discussed, they have been interpreted as variants of the Egyptian *ankh* or *s3* sign.

Ronzevalle (1932: Pl. V and VII) was the first to collect a large number of similar symbols, which are attested on Phoenician glyptic, scarabs, weights, and coins as well as in the Punic world (for other parallels to these symbols see discussion of these stelae in Chapter I). His signs 29, 30, and 24 are exact replica of the symbols on stele 32, 42, and 44 respectively. Ronzevalle considered them all to be variants of the Egyptian hieroglyphic *ankh* sign, which he believed to be also at the origin of the Tanit sign.

In his short presentation of Phoenician symbols, Gubel (1992: 431) also considered similar signs to be variants of either *ankh* or *s3* sign: »*Vient ensuite une série de s.(symboles) dont la signification iconologique nous échappe toujours. P.ex., l'origine de l'ankh à tige bifurquée... n'est pas claire: s'agit-il d'une version locale de l'ankh égyptien ou de l'hiéroglyphe s3?*». Elsewhere, however, the same author underlines the fact that this symbol and the *ankh* must be different since they appear sometimes together in the glyptic of the second millennium (1985: 179 and note 24). Teissier (1996: 104 and Fig. 49) who studied Egyptian symbols on Near Eastern glyptic of the Middle Bronze Age considers both shapes which occur together on the same seal, one with a vertical and the other with an inverted V-shaped stand, to represent the *ankh* sign. She believes that such «Typological differences do not appear to be significant» on Middle Bronze Age seals. Lipinski (1995: 207,107 and 209, 118) refers to these symbols as «*pseudo-ankh*» and sees in them the predecessors of the Tanit sign. Hölbl (1989: 324 and note 35) objects to this designation because he believes that these signs are real hieroglyphs, which clearly reflect the Egyptian milieu from which they were borrowed. Finally, Nunn (2000: 96 and Pl.49, 89) interprets symbols with a forked base and circular head encompassing a round protuberance as *ankh* signs. Another symbol with a more oval head containing an unidentified motif inside it and resting on forked legs, very similar to the symbol on stele 32, is interpreted as the hieroglyphic sign *s3*, which means «protection» (Nunn 2000: 100, Pl. 54, 139).

Notwithstanding the similarity of these signs with the *ankh* as well as the fact that scholars are almost unanimous in interpreting them as variants of this sign (see Chapter 1 under stele 32, 42, 44)[2], there is, I believe, evidence to argue that these unusual symbols may have locally developed in order to adapt the *ankh* sign, to express or symbolize another religious reality, namely the representation of a *betyl* resting on a stool. One has to remember in this context that even Egyptians freely used hieroglyphic signs in art and modified them to represent an item: hence a vase found in the tomb of Tutankhamun is entirely made of such modified hieroglyphic signs. The *ankh* sign in particular, has on the above-mentioned vase, its crossbar shown as arms grasping the other signs (Wilkinson 1992: 10 and frontispiece figure). Phoenicians, like Egyptians, most probably used hieroglyphs very much in the same «secondary» way described by Wilkinson (1992: 11):» At this secondary level, objects, people or even gestures may be represented so as to suggest the form of the hieroglyphic signs and thus spell out a symbolic message.» (see also Wilkinson 1994: 151-161).

Since the *ankh* sign is a sandal strap or knot with joined laces, which are normally represented as one vertical line, all what the artist needed to do was to widely separate (écarter) them and to slightly modify the shape of the head, making it either perfectly circular or hemispherical, in order to suggest a sketched piece of furniture on which a *betyl* stood.

As mentioned above, *betyls* were placed on Astarte thrones, on stools, and were carried on portable shrines. The Phoenician terracotta plaque, which was published by Ronzevalle (1932: 60 and Pl. XI, 1) bears a similar representation. The similarity of this representation with the three symbols discussed is striking. Soyez (1972: 158 and Pl.II: 7) describes the terracotta as «*...un naïsque de terre cuite, abritant un siège pliant porteur d'un disque...*» The question is whether the disc placed on the folding stool may be identified as a *betyl*.

2. I am very grateful to Egyptologist Joachim Quack for having discussed these symbols with me. He was reluctant at considering these awkward signs as real hieroglyphs but he did not exclude the fact that they may have been a later and local development of the original *ankh* sign. He rejected the identification of any of them with *s3*.

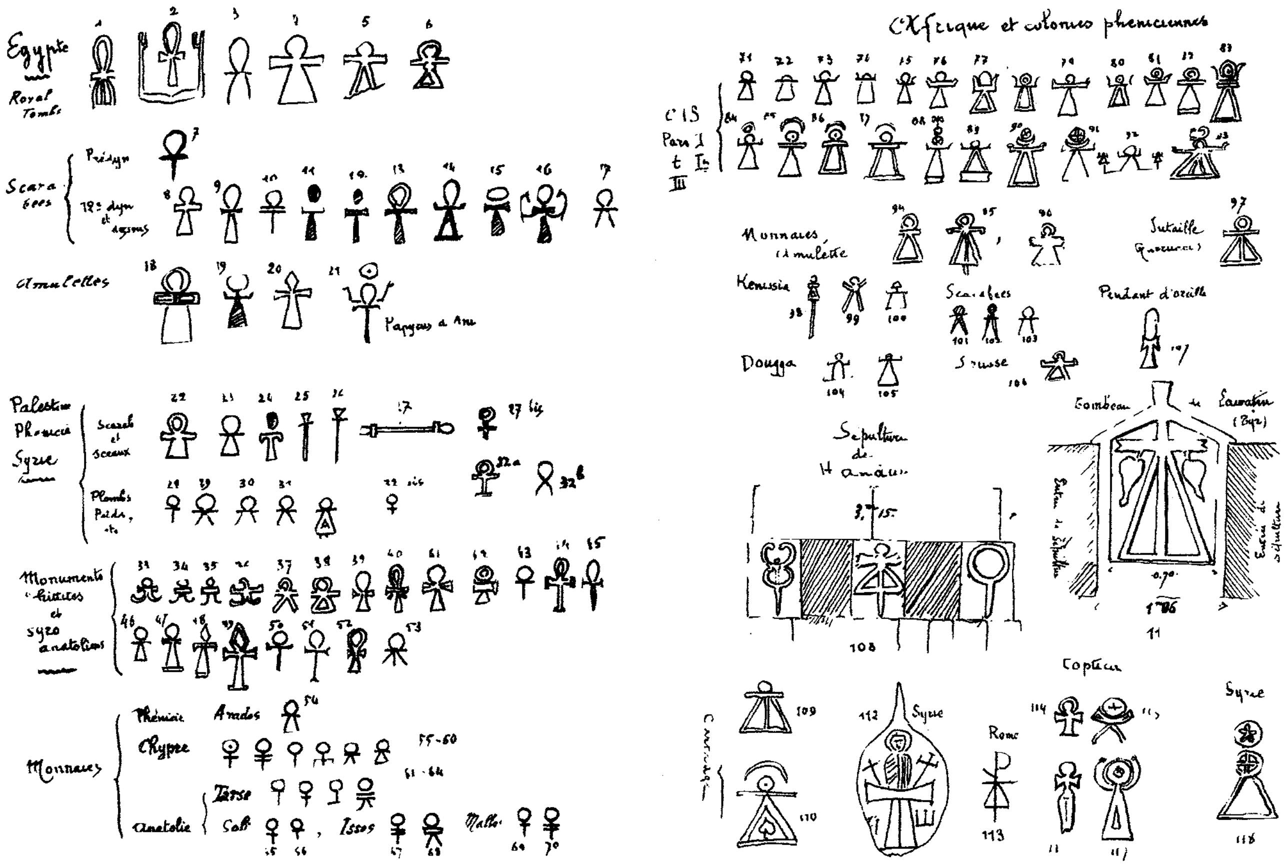


Fig. 107. «*ankh*», *pseudo-ankh,* and Tanit signs. (Ronzevalle 1932: V and XI, 5).



Fig. 108. Terracotta plaque representing a *betyl* on a folding stool (Ronzevalle 1932).

According to Milik (1967: 570):» *Les bétyles ... devaient garder la forme d'un globe, ou tout au moins de l'hémisphère ou de l'omphalos*». So *betyls* are usually, but not necessarily, represented as a conical, spherical or hemispherical figure. Spherical *betyls* on a throne are also depicted on Carthaginian stelae (Uberti 1992: Fig. 319; Bisi 1967: Pl. V, 2).

On the other hand, the forked base of the *ankh*-like symbols was adapted to render the crossed legs of a folding stool. Folding thrones or stools are attested in Phoenician representations of furniture (Markoe 1985: 316, G3; Gubel: 1987, 199 ff, Fig. 28, 29, 30, Pl. XL, 153, 154). Straight-legged stools were represented as two vertical parallel lines like those of the *ankh*-like symbol on stele 44.

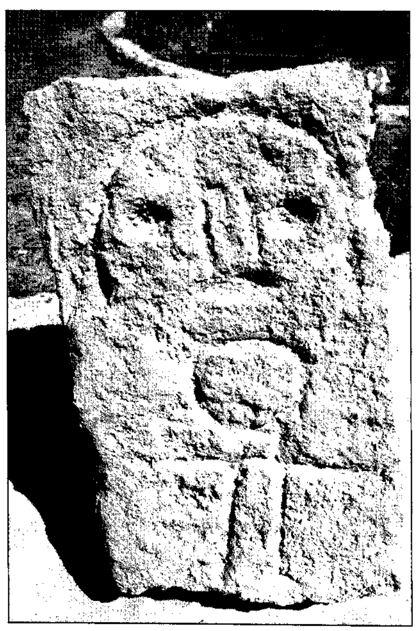
In the light of the above, the *pseudo-ankh* sign may have acquired a double function: a prophylactic function bestowed by the original amulet-shaped hieroglyphic sign and a religious one by making it reminiscent of a sacred *betyl*, the stone symbolizing the deity.

Further evidence for this interpretation is the fact that inside the globular head of the symbol on stele 32, a pomegranate is depicted, a device usually used to represent the goddess Astarte. The fruit is represented as a circle topped by four short vertical lines. Such stylized representations of the pomegranate are common in Phoenician art: they are attested on the Nimrud patera (Wagner 1980: Pl. 4-1) and on Punic stelae like the one from Carthage at the Bibliothèque Nationale (Perrot-Chipiez 1885: Fig. 335) and the one from Medeina illustrated by Picard (1957: Cb-1067) and Bisi (1967: Fig. 79). A pomegranate placed on a *betyl* is also attested on the Burj ash-Shemali stele 54, which provides additional evidence for the identification of the globular head of the pseudo-ankh sign as a *betyl*.

According to Bonatz (2000: 86 and note 83), the pomegranate is a genuine Near Eastern symbol the use of which became widespread in the Mediterranean both as divine attribute and as food for the dead. An Egyptian stele (Hölbl 1985: Pl. IXa) attests the use of the pomegranate as food for the dead. This fruit is usually associated with the fertility goddess Astarte/Tanit: «*Tanit et Baal prenaient enfin pour leur dévots bien d'autres apparences: celle du palmier qui, aujourd'hui encore en orient représente la générosité providentielle; celle de la grenade, dont les mille pépins évoquent l'inépuisable fécondité de la terre nourricière...*» *(Picard 1954: 78)*. The fact that the pomegranate was one of Tanit/Astarte's symbols not only identifies the deity represented by the *betyl* of stele 32 and 54, it also brings additional support for the role played by Tanit/Astarte in funerary rituals.



Stele 32



Stele 42



Stele 44

Fig. 109. *Pseudo-ankh* signs.

The *ankh* sign (Fig. 111)

Next to the above series of *ankh-related* or «*pseudo-ankh*» signs, which are generally considered to be a distortion, a «*Syro-Phoenician aberration*» (Culican 1974: 197), of the original Egyptian hieroglyphic sign *ankh,* meaning life, «genuine» hieroglyphic signs do appear on Phoenician monuments. This is clearly the case of the symbol on stele 6, which consists of a circle resting on a T-shaped form. This sign has been unanimously considered to represent a simplified form of the Egyptian hieroglyph *ankh.*

As already mentioned (see chapter I), this sign appears as early as the second millennium B.C. on Palestinian seals (Keel 1997 has a wealth of examples from that period; also Keel 1992: 32a, 32d, 34c, 79d, 92a). It becomes very widely attested in the Iron Age on Phoenician seals (Fig. 110) (Bordreuil 1986: Nos 1, 18) and tombstones (Delavault-Lemaire 1979: Pl. III, 5; Cross 2002: Fig. App. 1.4.), as well as on Palestinian glyptic (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 247a, 249, 255, 279, 339, 340b). It appears very early on scarabs in association with another hieroglyph, the *nefer* sign which means «good, perfect».

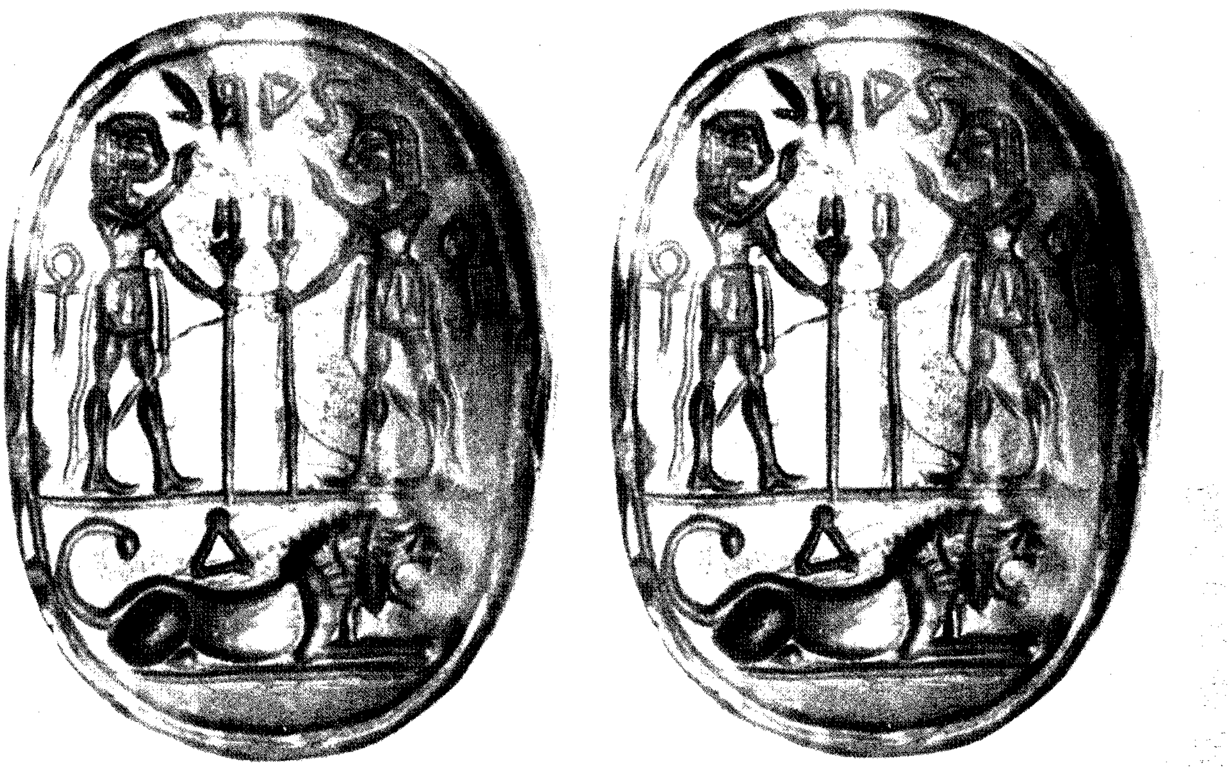


Fig. 110. *Ankh* sign on Phoenician seals (Bordreuil 1986: Fig. 254).

Another almost identical symbol appears on stele 17 and 26. The only difference is that the horizontal line is drawn a few centimeters below the circular head. This form of the sign is attested on scarabs where it has been identified as a variant of the *ankh.* Parallels to this variant are attested in second (Keel 213, 327; 295, 564; 299, 579) as well as first millennium glyptic (Keel 1997: 567, 103; 583, 147; 593, 176; 749, 4; see also Perrot-Chipiez 1885: Fig. 437).

As already mentioned, the hieroglyphic sign, *ankh*, means «life» (te Velde 1985: 66). In funerary contexts however, the sign came to symbolize eternal life (Derchain 1975: 268-269) and it is probably this meaning that the sign has on the funerary stelae.

There is a variant of the *ankh* sign with a triangular instead of a circular head, which sometimes appear in Phoenician and Hebrew glyptic, in connection with astral symbols. According to Uehlinger (1990: 324), this variant

is also to be identified as an *ankh* or life sign and should not be interpreted as an astral symbol. He also suggested that the *ankh* sign used in connection with astral symbols may have occasionally been associated with the cult of Astarte, Queen of Heavens: » *Auch von daher ist eine-zumindest okkasionelle- Verbindung des 'nh-ähnlichen Elements mit der Göttin Ištar/Astarte, der «Himmelskönigin», zu erwägen...zumal es auf einem phönizischen Namensiegel direct vor der Göttin zu sehen ist*» (1990: 326).

The *nfr* sign (Fig. 111)

A second hieroglyphic sign is attested on stele 52. It consists of a circle attached to a vertical line that ends with a short horizontal stroke. This sign is identified as the Egyptian hieroglyph *nfr*, «heart plus windpipe» (Gardiner 1957; Wilkinson 1992: 79), meaning «good, perfect». It is usually represented in its original form with the circular head at the bottom but it may also be represented upside down (for example Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 39b; 1997: 109, 12; Taylor 2004: Fig. 1, 1809) or lying horizontally (Keel 1997: 137, 95-96; 731, 110; Taylor 2004: Fig.1, 1780). It may have one or two horizontal lines.

Both *ankh* and *nefer* signs appear very often on seals, scarabs and stelae. They are among the most widely borrowed Egyptian hieroglyphs in Syro-Palestinian iconography. The reason why these as well as other specific Egyptian hieroglyphs are so often represented independently on monuments is because they were used as amulets: »*Symbolic qualities of the hieroglyphic writing-signs become apparent especially in those hieroglyphs that were used as amulets*» (te Velde 1985-86: 65; see also Keel 1995: 167). Some, like the *ankh* sign, were used as amulets as early as the late third millennium B.C. while others, like the *nefer* sign, were first used on stelae and scarabs before being used as amulets (Keel 1995: 167). These hieroglyphs, which are known as *nefer* signs, were believed to bring luck:» *Wie nfr, das «schön, gut, glücklich, vollkommen» u.ä bedeutet, haben auch die anderen Zeichen weniger die Funktion, unheilvolle Kräfte abzuwehren und so apotropäisch zu wirken, als vielmehr die positiven Mächte für die TrägerInnen zu vergenwärtigen*» (Keel 1995: 168).

To conclude: Egyptian hieroglyphs enjoyed a very wide popularity in Phoenician art and they were used on funerary stelae most probably in their original Egyptian function as «*porte-bonheur*» as well as symbols for eternal life, youth, and regeneration. Wilkinson (1992: 10), correctly pointed out that in Egypt: «Individual hieroglyphic signs were ...often the models for parts or even whole works of art and complex compositions, and the interaction between writing and pictorial representation was an ever present reality».

III.2.e The isosceles triangle (Fig. 112) and the origin of the «Tanit sign»

On stele 45, two isosceles triangles are depicted. Garbini (1980: 183) is the only scholar who attempted an interpretation of this symbol which appears in Sardinia and in Malta. According to him, in a religious and funerary context, this sign represents the goddess Astarte. The Italian scholar also suggested an oriental origin of the symbol, a suggestion now confirmed by the evidence of stele 45.

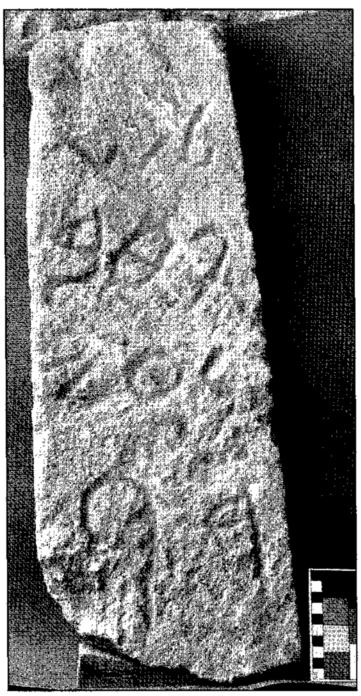
Triangles as symbols of the goddess Astarte are attested in the Wasta grotto (Beaulieu and Mouterde 1947-48: Pl. V and Fig. 1). The triangles in the Wasta grotto differ however in that they are represented with apex at bottom (for the same motif, see also Pritchard 1988: Fig. 9: 2, dated to the LBA) and with a vertical incision. They most probably represent pubic triangles and/or female sexual organs. Their identification as Astarte symbols is suggested by one of the inscriptions left by worshippers on the walls, which confirms that the grotto was dedicated to the cult of Aphrodite-Astarte (Beaulieu and Mouterde 1947-48: 6 ff). Though plausible, Garbini's interpretation of the isosceles triangle as a symbol of Astarte still awaits decisive evidence.

We have to admit that there is no satisfactory interpretation of the isosceles triangle symbol, a correct identification and understanding of which may have a strong bearing on the origin and interpretation of the Tanit sign[3].

3. The problem of the origin and meaning of the Tanit sign was often discussed. For a summary of the main theories and the related bibliography, see Sally Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context.* JSOT/ASOR Monographic Series, No 3. Sheffield Academic Press 1991 and Lipinski 1995: 209ff.


Stele 6


Stele 17


Stele 20


Stele 26


Stele 52

Fig. 111. *Ankh* and *nfr* signs.

Origin and meaning of the Tanit sign

Based on his identification of the isosceles triangle as a symbol of Astarte, Garbini presented a highly attractive hypothesis concerning the origin and the meaning of the so-called Tanit sign, a hypothesis, which seems to find additional support in the evidence provided by stele 45. He considered that the Tanit sign is a later combination of both the *ankh* sign and the isosceles triangle. The first one symbolizes life while the other symbolizes fertility (Garbini 1980: 179).

That the Tanit sign is a combination of *ankh* and triangle seems to find additional support in the symbol depicted on a funerary monument found in Hanaway, east of Tyre (Virolleaud 1924: Fig. 3, Bisi 1967: 30 and Fig.6), as well as on a Carthaginian stele (Brown 1986: Fig. 45, *ff*). On both monuments, the sign is clearly a combination of the *ankh* and triangle symbols. Bisi (1967: 30-31) underlined however the fact that this form of the Tanit sign, with the vertical shaft of the *ankh* crossing the triangle, is very rare in both Phoenicia and the West and she described it as an *unicum*.

The fact that both triangle and *ankh* sign appear separately long before the first attested Tanit sign in both East and West, speaks also in favor of the development proposed by Garbini. Indeed, Tanit signs in their later canonical or standard form do not appear in Carthage (Bisi 1967:29), in Phoenicia, and in Palestine (Linder 1973: 182ff; Dothan 1974: 44ff.; Benigni 1975:17ff; Wolff 1991; Lipinski 1995: 209ff) before the 4th c. B.C. while the symbols on the Phoenician stelae cannot be later than the 6th c. B.C.

However attractive this interpretation may be, one has to admit that it does not account for all the later variants or developments of the Tanit sign. If one contemplates the various representations of the Tanit sign documented by Bisi (1967: Fig. 7) and Picard (1957: Tabeau II), the constant elements are clearly the circular head, the crossbar with or without raised ends, an inverted V-shaped support with or without a base. These elements are indeed identical to those forming the so-called *pseudo-ankh* signs depicted above as already observed by Ronzevalle (1932) and Lipinski (1995: 209 ff) who both believe that the *ankh* sign is the symbol out of which the Tanit sign developed.

Since *pseudo-ankh* and Tanit sign share the same basic features, the same argument that was developed for the interpretation of the *pseudo-ankh* sign may thus be developed here for the interpretation of the Tanit sign, namely that it adapted the *ankh* sign to represent a *betyl* resting on a throne or on a portable shrine.

The Tanit sign has been variously explained. Brown (1986: 162) summed up all the interpretations that have been proposed: »*The motif has been interpreted variously as a Tyrian anchor, a Cypriot palmette, an Egyptian ankh, a worshipper praying (or a symbol of the prayer or vow itself), a divinity with hands raised in benediction, a female figure with her hands at her breasts, a Minoan female idol, and a betyl combined with an astral disc*».

The interpretation of the Tanit sign proposed here is a variant of the above-proposed evolution of the *ankh* sign. This evolution, as previously argued, adapted the *ankh* sign to represent a sacred *betyl* on a stool. Our suggestion provides plausible explanations to all the later variants of the sign:

1. The raised or curved ends of the crossbar of the Tanit sign could represent the arms of the throne, altar, or stool on which the *betyl* stood. On the other hand, the fact that hieroglyphic signs, mainly the *ankh* sign, were often «personified», may also account for this later development and explain the later »anthropomorphic» aspect of the Tanit sign. Its curving crossbar was indeed compared to hands and its later form developed a sort of human shape. As already mentioned, *ankh* signs in Egypt are depicted with a crossbar in the shape of hands and according to Wilkinson (1992: 11) personified hieroglyphs are a device used «to identify hypostases-the personifications of ideas or non-human things- or to enrich the symbolic value of an object in some way».
2. The base with incurved sides on which the Tanit sign sometimes stands (Bisi 1967: Fig. 7: a, c, d, e, g, h , j, o, s) has its origin in the representation of Egyptian podiums on which hemispherical or rectangular *betyls* and/or shrines stand (Brown 1986: Fig. 45, *h, dd;* Bisi 1967: Pl. XVII, 2; XXI, 2; see also stele 54). This is clear evidence that the Tanit sign represents a device that originally stood on a podium. The later base of the inverted V-shaped sign may have resulted from a simplification of this podium or base.
3. The fact that the circular head of the Tanit sign is sometimes replaced by a pomegranate like on the Medeina stele (Bisi 1967: Fig. 79) or by a caduceus (Brown 1986: 526), or by a rosette (Picard 1957: Cb-424 and Cb-685), or by a divided cross (Picard 1957: Cb-563) or by a crescent moon topped by a sun-disc (Bi-

si 1967: Fig. 82), strengthens the assumption that this component of the sign represents or symbolizes the deity, i-e a *betyl*, and could be replaced by another of his/her symbols. Often again, the head has a hemispherical shape clearly suggesting an omphalos-shaped *betyl*.

4. Finally, the Tanit sign in the West is often represented inside a shrine (see for example Picard 1957: Pl. XLVI, Cb-334, 335) in the very same way as the *betyl* on a stool or throne is represented inside an *aedicula* on the above-mentioned stelae and coins of Lebanon.

To conclude: The isosceles triangle is a symbol that was used in funerary contexts but its meaning still escapes us. Whether it was at the origin of the later Tanit sign remains an open question. The evidence seems rather to suggest that the later Tanit sign is a composite symbol representing originally a circular or hemispherical *betyl* and the piece of furniture or architecture on which it stood. Its oriental origin, which was often doubted, cannot be anymore denied. Finally, it is not surprising that the most widespread religious symbols of the Phoenician world, *ankh* and *betyl*, combined to form a sort of logo or amulet, used for the protection of both the living and the dead (Picard 1957: 25).



Stele 45

Fig. 112. Isoceles Triangles.



Stele 11

Fig.113. Lotus bud.

III.2.f The Cross Symbol (Fig. 114)

Five stelae, 26, 27, 28, 38, and 47, are decorated with an incised cross. On stele 26, the cross is associated with two *ankh* signs and two discs placed in the lower and upper quadrants respectively. On stele 27, it is associated with the crescent-disc and on stele 28, with the U-shaped symbol; on stele 38 it appears alone below the inscription, and finally on stele 47, it was incised on the skull of a human head. On stele 27 and 28, the cross symbol has a longer

vertical line and is interrupted in its middle by the motif it is associated with. On the other three stelae, the cross has almost equally long arms.

The cross, as an independent motif, is attested on Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian seals and on Neo-Assyrian jewelry where, according to Black and Green (1992: 54), «*it is a sun-symbol, substituting for the solar disc, or in positions later occupied by the winged disc... There are strong indications for the cross as a further symbol (together with the solar and winged disc) of the sun god Šamaš (Utu)*».

Neo-Babylonian iconography provides evidence for a solar disc divided into four quadrants by a cross as attested on a representation of the Weather-god Adad from Babylon (Seidl 2000: 100, Fig 7). On the god's dress are represented three discs: the upper one is divided into four quadrants by a cross. A round motif, possibly a planet or a star, is placed in each quadrant. On the god's chest is another smaller disc inside which is a cross. On a neo-Babylonian *kudurru* (Seidl 2000: Fig. 8) the dress of a female goddess is decorated with planet representations and crosses. The same motifs are depicted on a wall in Persepolis (Seidl 2000: Fig. 9).

From Syria/Palestine, the closest parallel to the symbol on stele 26 is a second millennium seal from Tell el 'Ağul (Keel 1997: 185, 244) representing a rotated cross with four circles in the quadrants. The circles have a dot in the middle to represent the sun (Wilkinson 1992: 10, 129). Solar discs are also depicted in the upper quadrants on stele 26.

Other close parallels to the symbol under discussion are crosses placed within a solar disc. This motif is attested in second millennium B.C. Syria-Palestine. One example is the Canaanite Late Bronze Age stele (Lipinski 1995: 71), now in the Hecht Museum collection, which represents a female goddess wearing a Hathor crown. The latter consists of a wide-open pair of horns inside which is a sun-disc. A cross divides the disc into four quadrants and inside each is a protruding round motif, which cannot be clearly identified. The same symbol is also found on a stele from Ugarit (Bisi 1967: Pl. III, 1) and on a Late Bronze Age scarab from Ashkelon (Keel 1997: 50).

It is very interesting to note that the cross symbol appears on three Akhziv stelae (Cross 2002: Nos 2, 5, 6) and in one case, stele No 5, within a rectangle. Cross (2002: 171) believes that this symbol is related to the *crux ansata*, which is highly improbable since both signs appear simultaneously on stele 26. Another Iron Age parallel, cross inside a disc, is represented on two bronze cultic objects published by Seyrig (1966: 16 ff and Pls. VIII and IX).

The same symbol also occurs in the Punic world where it is always attested inside a solar disc. In one example depicting the sun above the crescent moon (Bisi 1967: Fig. 86), the solar symbol is divided by a cross and in each of the quadrants is a dot while in other examples (Bisi 1967: Pl. XVI, 1), quadrants are empty.

In the light of the above evidence, it is very likely that the cross motif depicted on the Phoenician stelae should be interpreted as a simplification of the divided sun-disc motif as suggested by Black and Green. On the very poor representations of the funerary stelae from Lebanon, it is possible that the divided solar disc may have been reduced to a simple incised cross.

If the identification of the cross symbol as the sun seems to be a reasonable suggestion, its interpretation remains problematic. As already pointed out, little is known in Phoenician religion about the attributes and role of heavenly bodies, mainly the Sun- and Moon-god.

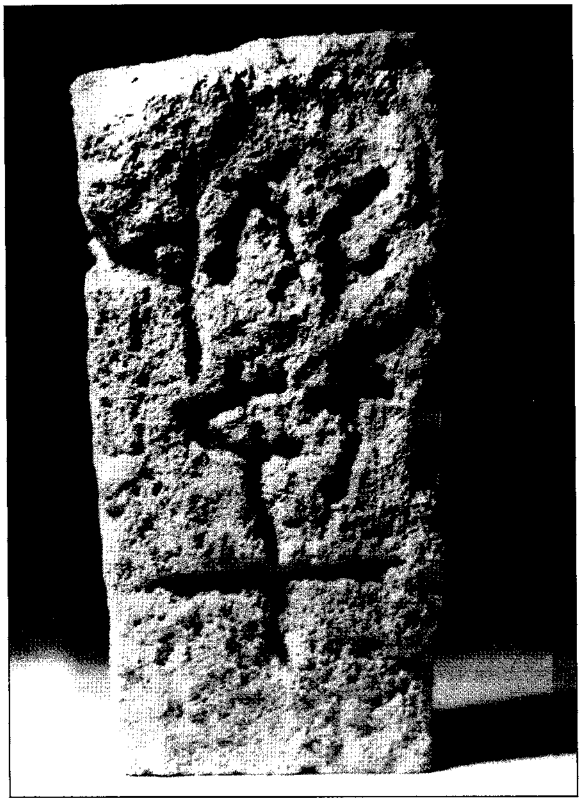
Concerning the possible role that a sun god or goddess may have played in the Phoenician funerary cult, there is only indirect evidence from Ugarit. The Ugaritic sun-goddess Shapash played a role in the funerary cult of the kingdom as attested in the Baal cycle texts (Wyatt 1998: 129, note 65, 139). It is indeed with her help that the dead body of Baal is found and secured a proper burial. This role in the funerary cult may have been played in Phoenicia by the sun god(dess) (Bonnet-Lipinski 1992b: 409; Lipinski 1995: 268 and note 350). A possible survival of the sun goddess in a woman-headed beetle, which appears on a Hebrew seal is suggested by Uehlinger (Sass-Uehlinger 1993: 277). The representation of the Sun-god Ra as a beetle rising from the netherworld as the morning sun is attested in Egypt (Lurker 1980: 74) and symbolizes the regeneration power of the astral body. The very widespread use of the winged sun-disc on funerary stelae in later periods may strengthen such an assumption.

In Egypt, the sun god symbolized the emergence of new life because he seemed to be born daily in the East after having been swallowed by the sky goddess in the West. The daily itinerary of the sun was believed to go through four stages: sunrise, crossing of the sky, sunset and crossing of the Underworld (Assman 1984: 1088). In the Underworld «he gives life to the inhabitants of the nether world, gives each person his share of land to cultivate, execute the enemies...and is rejuvenated» (Watson 1991: 159). In short, the cross symbol may be interpreted as representing the Sun-god who symbolized regeneration and rebirth after death.

It is even more difficult to propose an interpretation of the symbol combination on stele 26, 27, 28. It may be either a mere juxtaposition or «free» composition of prophylactic and religious signs, or a perception of a cosmic reality in which the sun, as in Ugarit and Egypt, plays an important role in both the world of the living and the



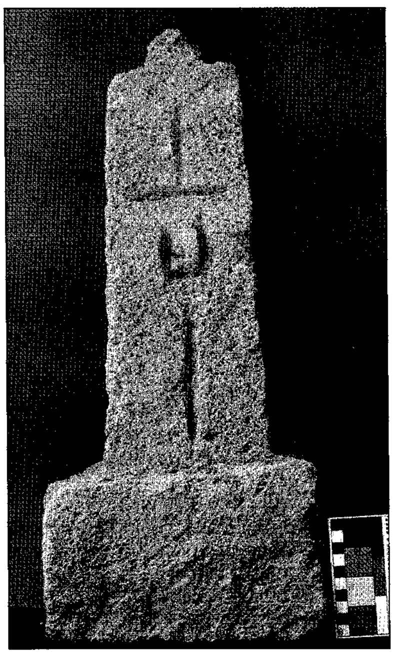
Stele 47



Stele 38



Stele 26



Stele 28



Stele 27

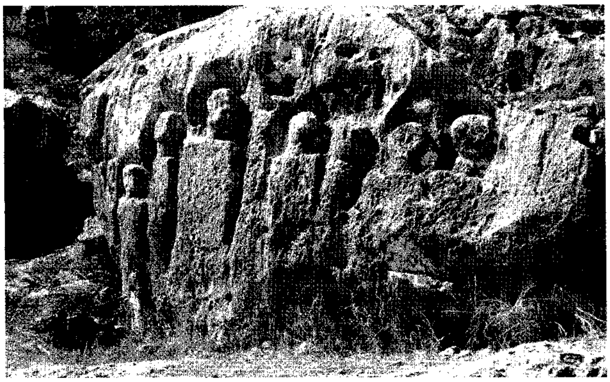
Fig. 114. Cross symbol.

world of the dead. On stele 26 for example, one is tempted to explain the four quadrants defined by the cross as the four world directions and/or the «upper» and «lower» worlds in which the heavenly body moves freely. The upper two quadrants with the sun disc may represent the world of the living, and the lower two quadrants with the *ankh* sign, symbol of eternal life, the world of the dead. This and any other interpretation remain, of course, highly hypothetical in the present state of the evidence.

III.2.g The Anthropomorphic Representations (Fig. 116)

Five stelae, 9, 44, 46, 47 and 50 represent human figures. Stele 47 and 50 are broken and only the heads are preserved while the other three are complete. These human representations differ greatly from each other as well as from those depicted on Punic stelae. While stele 46 was clearly cut in the shape of a human body others, like stele 9 and 44, consist in roughly engraved faces on a rectangular stone. Stele 47 and 50 are broken but since the surviving head is three-dimensional it is possible to assume that they have been cut as anthropomorphic stelae.

The anthropomorphic representations on the funerary stelae are the first of their kind to appear on Iron Age tombstones from Lebanon. Only one stele carved with a Negroid human face is known from Akhziv (Cross 2002: No 6; Cross seems however to doubt the authenticity of the engraved motif). The human rock reliefs of Wadi Cana (Kaoukabani 1971: 23-27) and Deir Qanun Ras al Ayn (Renan 1864: 690) east of Tyre, probably belong to the same tradition and represent close, though later parallels to these human figures. Renan (1864: 653) and Le Lasseur (1922: 122) found in the necropolis of Wasta and Mahalib respectively, human heads similar to the above-described ones.



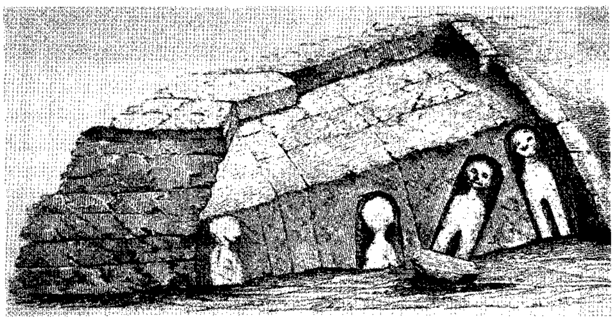


Fig. 115. Human figures from Wadi Cana (Photo courtesy G. Mass-Lindemann) and Deir Canun (Renan 1864).

The anthropomorphic representations of Cana, Wasta, Mahalib, and Deir Canun, share with those on the funerary stelae characteristic features such as a primitive and crude aspect, a naïve character of the face features and a shapeless body represented as a mere stone block. This type of anthropomorphic representations seems to have been very common in the funerary contexts of southern Phoenicia.

In the Punic world anthropomorphic representation are very well attested but they often radically differ from the Phoenician ones. Punic stelae often represent cultic scenes involving priests and gods (Picard 1957: 28 ff). Human figures inside a shrine were clearly identified as gods while priests were recognized at their dress and at the fact that they were depicted performing a sacrifice. Human representations that could not be clearly identified as either gods or priests were identified as worshippers. This is for example the case of human representations on a specific category of 5th-4th c. B.C. Carthaginian funerary stelae, which always depict a person with a raised hand, and of which one (Ferron 1975: Pl. CXXXVII) is a close parallel to stele 9. Ferron (1975: 286 ff) rejected this interpretation and argued that these anthropomorphic figures are divine beings, «*morts-dieux*» or «deified deceased», and he defended their Phoenician origin: »*En Phénicie comme dans la «Nouvelle Tyr», l'ensemble de ces figures doivent être interprétées comme des morts-dieux, et non pas comme des adorants, malgré l'accord unanime des orientalistes à ce sujet*» (287). According to Ferron (1975: 301-302), the prototype for these human representations are the figures depicted on the lid of the Ahiram sarcophagus which he interpreted as representing the deified deceased.

The interpretation of the human figures on the funerary stelae is more difficult for lack of significant clues and also because they do not form a homogeneous group. Since they are clearly different, should each type of human representation be differently interpreted? In other words, could each type have had a different meaning and a different role? It is possible but without additional evidence, it is of course difficult to answer this question.

For the interpretation of these anthropomorphic figures, three suggestions can be proposed:

1. The human figure represents the deceased
2. The human figure represents a divine being
3. The human figure is the personification of a force enjoying apotropaic powers.

Gawlikowski (1970: 10) favors the first interpretation for all types of stelae whether human-shaped or not. As already mentioned in Chapter I, he thinks that any funerary monument, whatever its shape, represents the dead. He argues that the stele is the receptacle of the dead's soul: «*L'âme du défunt était censée d'habiter la pierre dressée, sa représentation*» (Gawlkowski 1970: 18).

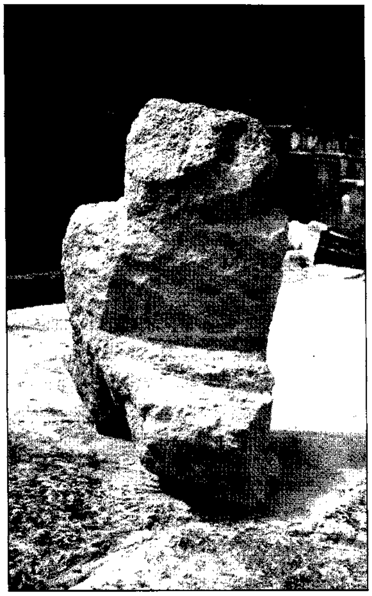
In their study of the anthropomorphic stele found in Cnossos, Kourou and Grammatikaki (1998: 242 and note 24) adopted Gawlikowski's (1972) and Kaoukabani's (1971: 34-35) interpretation of funerary monuments in general and of those of the Wadi Cana in particular. Both scholars are of the opinion that the rock reliefs of Cana are so-called *nefesh* monuments dedicated to commemorating the deceased. Based on this assumption, Kourou and Grammatikaki argued that since the stele becomes the residence of the dead person's soul, it is to be expected that it should be given a human shape. So all human-shaped stelae should be interpreted as representing the dead person.

Moscati (1995: 523-541) did not discuss the meaning or the symbolism of the stylized anthropomorphic representations on the Sardinian stelae, including the newly discovered material from the area of Sassari, which date to the Roman period but which are similar in many ways to the Lebanese examples. He denied any Punic influence on the Sassari stelae and he clearly opposed their funerary character to the votive character of the Punic ones. The human figures on the latter represent, according to him, gods or priests, while he expresses no opinion concerning the human figures from Sardinia.

In Lebanon, no human figure is represented standing inside a shrine and none of them presents any specific feature or attribute that may suggest its divine nature. There is maybe one exception: stele 47 has a cross, engraved on its skull. This symbol may be interpreted as an attribute of the Sun god (see above) but this evidence is too scanty to allow the interpretation of the figure on stele 47 as a divine representation or as the deified deceased.

The third possibility is to consider these human figures as apotropaeic representations. In favor of this interpretation, speaks the fact that on all stelae, only the face is depicted. Furthermore, the face has unrealistic, crude and schematized features, which add to its unnatural aspect and vague expression. The insistence on representing only the face and in representing it in such an elusive way, may suggest a function similar to that of funerary masks. These were sometimes made of stone (Ciasca 1988: 354), and they were very widespread in both Phoenicia and the colonies where they were mainly found in tombs (Ciasca 1988: 354). The apotropaeic function of these masks is generally accepted. They were used as a substitute for the decomposing face of the deceased in order to allow him/her access to the underworld but at times, they also aimed at covering it in order to prevent the propagation of demoniac powers, which the person could have acquired after death (Krien-Kummrow 1961: 902). Garbini was the first to ascribe an apotropaeic function to the stone head found in a tomb in Sardinia (see Chapter I).

In the light of the above evidence, the human figures represented on the funerary stelae could be interpreted as the personification of a supernatural force whose function was to protect the tomb, either by chasing threatening bad spirits away or by preventing those who would eventually come out of the tomb to harm the living. Made both from an imperishable material, the mask was placed inside the tomb to protect the dead himself in the afterlife while the anthropomorphic stele, which is usually placed either at the entrance of or outside the tomb, aimed at protecting the sepulture of the deceased from demoniac forces and eventually, from tomb robbers. It is possible that some sectors of the cemetery and not individual tombs were placed under such protection since the use of anthropomorphic stelae was not generalized and none of them was inscribed with a personal name.



Stele 46



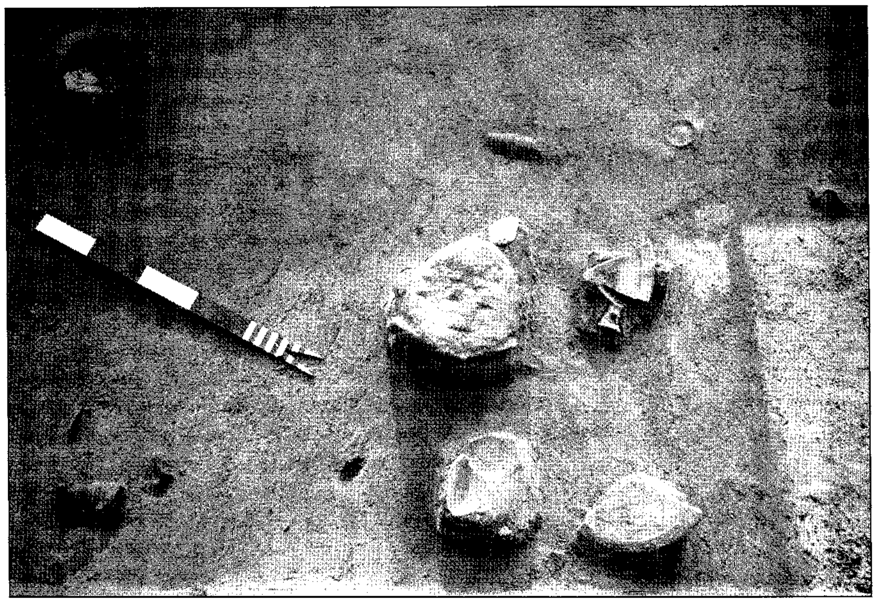
Stele 47



Stele 9



Stele 44



Stele 50

Fig. 116. Human figures.

III.2.h The shrine (Fig. 117)

Four of the Common stelae, 7, 10, 43, 48, and all the Persian period ones, 53-59, represent shrines. The shrine on stele 7 and 43 is a simple *naos* consisting in a rectangular or square niche. It is clearly in the tradition of second millennium *naoi* like those found in the Obelisk temple in Byblos, which Wagner (1980: 122) calls «*Kastenförmiger Naiskostyp*». A figurine representing the god or goddess was most probably placed inside the shrine (see Chapter I). The Iron Age stone shrine model from Lebanon, which was first published by Seyrig (1966: VIII), has a standing

male figure flanked by two bulls, which clearly confirms this tradition. This type of shrine, which goes back to the 9th c. B.C. (see stele 7) seems to be the oldest Iron Age type attested.

Slightly later is the shrine depicted on stele 10: It displays clear Egyptian influence and corresponds to Wagner's type 3.3.3.1 (1980: 123) which depicts only the façade of the shrine:» *Die architektonische Gliederung ist auf die Fassade beschränkt. Pfosten und Sturz bilden die Rahmung der Öffnung. Darüber folgt eine Hohlkehle, die sich nur nach vorne vorwölbt*». The symbol placed inside the shrine is quite unusual and may be identified as a male sexual organ. If Lipinski (1995: 215 ff) is correct in his assumption that Pa'am could also mean Phallus, the symbol could very well represent this deity.

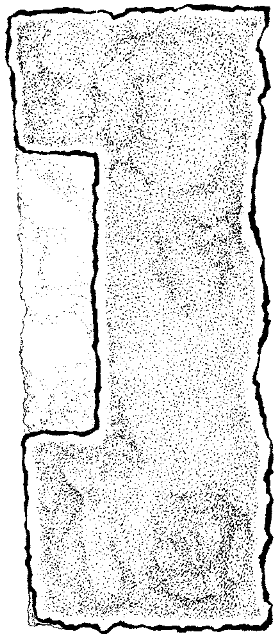
Shrines on stele 53 to 59 imitate Egyptian *naiskoi* and Wagner (1980) thoroughly discussed all motifs, which were borrowed from Egypt. This type of shrine corresponds to Wagner's type 3.3.4 characterized by typically Egyptian hollow gorge or cornice, *uraeus* frieze and winged sun disc. Alternating lotus buds and flowers, which in Egypt are found only on kiosks and not on *naiskoi*, decorate the lintel (for parallels from Egypt and Phoenicia see Wagner 1980: 129ff, 208 note75). Lotus buds and flowers are regeneration symbols (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 61, 194, 282), which also occur on stele 11 (Fig. 113). The lotus flower was believed to be the cradle of the Sun god and «is therefore a very important organism which was viewed as being an important initiator of the creation of the cosmos, and was abundantly used as religious symbol communicating its creative and regenerative powers» (Watson 1991: 158).

Local Phoenician motifs were also used to decorate this Egyptian type of shrine: palmettes were used for the doorjambs (see Wagner 1980: 130, 209 notes 76-80): they are widely known to symbolize generosity (Picard 1954: 78; Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 80:» ...*der stilisierte Baum die gebärfähige und nährende Segensmacht der fruchtbaren Erde darstellt*...») and were often used as symbols of the goddess Astarte (Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 34). Finally, b*etyls* and Astarte thrones, which represent the deity, were placed inside the shrine.

Notwithstanding typological differences, all shrines served a cultic and religious function the details of which are still in the dark (for recent archaeological evidence related to Phoenician funerary cult from the cemetery of Tyre el-Bass, see Aubet 2004: 61 ff). One obvious purpose was to place the tomb and the dead under the protection of the deity who was present in the shrine and who was the recipient of the cultic and funerary offerings. In his discussion of the iconography of Punic stelae representing shrines, which were found in *tophets*, Ribichini (2002: 438-439) underlines the cultic role of this type of stelae and believes that they represent the shrine that existed inside the *tophet*'s precinct and which was dedicated to the deity in charge of the sacred funerary area. These stelae played therefore an important role in the funerary cult: «*In definitiva, le stele in forma di sacello evocano gli edifici reali innalzati nel tofet e per questo sono al centro dell'attenzione per il fedele che si recava in quell luogo; il tempietto, a sua volta, replica in funzione comunitaria ciò que la stele rappresenta per la devozione privata e magnifica..la fede nel poteri del dio*...». This interpretation finds additional support in the fact that stone and clay shrine models were even placed inside the tomb. Several examples are attested from Sidon and Tyre (see Chapter I and Metzger 2004). Some of them (stele 53-59) are clear copies of the shrine depicted on the stele, which, in turn, must have imitated the actual temple. This evidence underlines the central role shrines played in the Phoenician funerary cult.

Whether the deity placed inside the shrine in Phoenician cemeteries was always the same remains an open question. The evidence from the Burj ash-Shemali stele (54), which has two *betyls* as well as that of Punic stelae, which have groups of two or three *betyls*, indicates however that more than one god or goddess may have been involved in the funerary cult. In the absence of written records and of clear attributes, the issue of their identity remains unsolved. In the shrine model published by Seyrig (1966: VIII), the god represented is most probably the weather-god Baal since bulls flank the divine figure while in the model found by Renan (Gubel 2002: No 75), the identity of the seated male god could not be determined. On a terracotta plaque found in Helaliyye, near Sidon, now in the Louvre Museum (AO 2719), a nude female goddess standing on two crouching lions clearly identifiable with Astarte, is depicted inside a *naiskos* (Gubel 1986: 274, Fig.10). Some stelae (Stele 55-56) have Astarte thrones placed inside the shrine but these unfortunately do not betray the identity of the deity they are supposed to represent. Finally, as already mentioned, stele 10 may represent the god Pa'am. The available evidence hence indicates that different gods, among whom Baal, Astarte and Pa'am, may have played a role in the funerary cult.





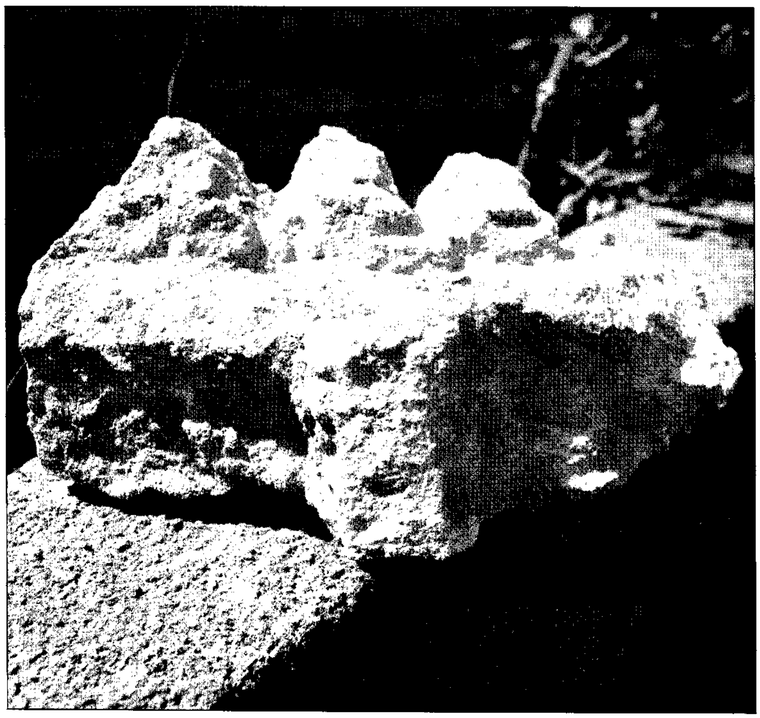


Stele 7

Stele 43



Stele 10



Stele 48

Fig. 117. Shrines.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What can be said about the role and the contribution of the stelae to the funerary cult of the Phoenician motherland?

The first remark concerns the limited number, if not the *quasi* absence of tombstones from large Phoenician cemeteries. Notwithstanding the reasons mentioned in Chapter I, the evidence suggests that the use of funerary stelae in Phoenicia was occasional and not systematic. As previously mentioned, two of the largest Iron Age cemeteries of Lebanon, Khalde and Sidon-Dakerman, have yielded one stele each and only seven are known from the area of Sidon where hundreds of tombs have been visited. The 1997 and 2002 seasons of excavations in the cemetery of el-Bass in Tyre have yielded more tombs than stelae: while over eighty urns were excavated, only ten gravestones were found. On the other hand, available evidence from regular excavations in two Sidonian (Sidon and Khalde) and two Tyrian cities (Tyre and Akhziv), seems to suggest that the tradition of erecting stelae, though limited, was more widespread in the Tyrian than in the Sidonian kingdom. The above evidence may lead to the conclusion that erecting a stele was not a fundamental aspect of the Phoenician funerary cult.

When available, funerary stelae do not betray much about Phoenician eschatology. Concerning the epigraphic evidence, it is restricted to personal names, which identify the deceased and may possibly have had a commemorative function. The contribution of the stelae to Phoenician onomastics and script is more substantial than their contribution to funerary traditions and views of the afterlife. The overwhelming number of theophorous personal names has nevertheless shed light on Phoenician popular deities otherwise unattested in the texts.

Concerning iconography, Phoenician funerary representations are substantially different from those of neighboring North Syria. First, the conspicuous absence of the funerary banquet/meal scene, which is the most widespread funerary representation on Iron Age funerary stelae from Syria (Bonatz 2000), is to be noted. Although a cultic meal is archaeologically attested to have taken place after the sealing of the tomb in both the Phoenician motherland and the colonies (Aubet 2004: 61), it was never the theme of iconographic representations on the stelae. Only one such scene is attested on a Phoenician funerary monument: it is the famous relief depicted on the sarcophagus of Ahiram, king of Byblos.

A variety of other themes are however attested in Phoenicia. In spite of the conjectural and often obscure nature of the depicted symbols, ideas of regeneration, rebirth, and eternal life are clearly expressed through the hieroglyphic *ankh* and *nefer* signs, the sun-disc, the lotus bud, and the palm tree. This idea of regeneration in the afterlife seems to have been widespread among the common people. It finds additional support in the archaeological evidence, which attests the systematic deposition of a scarab, symbol of spontaneous life (Wilkinson 1992: 113) inside the cinerary urns (Aubet 2004: 59; Gamer-Wallert 2004: 397 ff).

Next to hope for a new life after death, symbols like the *nefer* signs, the *uraei*, and the winged sun-disc, also had a prophylactic, protective function. Some others like the human symbols may have occasionally had an apotropaeic role, which makes it likely that Phoenicians probably believed in demoniac powers or restless spirits rising from the underworld.

Furthermore, if correctly interpreted, the widespread representation of *betyls* and empty Astarte thrones on the stelae, confirms the prevailing aniconic character of Phoenician popular religion as suggested by Mettinger (1995: 106). This iconography emphasizes the role of the deity in the funerary cult. Recurring symbols of *betyls* and shrines demonstrate that the Phoenicians expected divine presence, support, and protection in the Underworld. Additional evidence for this suggested divine role is the presence of shrine models inside the tomb. These obviously aimed at providing a direct and more effective protection through close divine presence. It is likely that the god's assistance did not only aim at securing the journey to the underworld but at placing the dead in the afterlife under the same divine protection he/she enjoyed in the world of the living.

Symbols like *betyls* or empty thrones represented on funerary stelae, do not however betray the nature and identity of the deities responsible for man's welfare in the underworld. One of these divine beings may be Astarte/Tanit: the pomegranate, which is represented twice on the stelae placed on a *betyl,* the so-called Astarte thrones (for their identification with Astarte or Eshmun see Mettinger 1995: 106), as well as the female figure standing on crouching lions inside the shrine model of Helaliyye, could hint at the goddess's presence and role in both the funerary cult and life after death.

Other divine beings too seem to have played a similar role: one of them is most probably the Weather-god represented as a male standing, flanked by bulls, inside a funerary shrine model (Seyrig 1966: VIII); another one may be the Sun god who is variously represented as a simple disc, a cross, a winged sun-disc or a disc flanked by *uraei*; and a third one is maybe the Moon-god represented by the crescent-moon. Finally, if his identification with

the phallic symbol inside a shrine on stele 10 is accepted, the fertility god Pa'am may have also played a role in the funerary cult.

What is to be understood from this evidence? One is tempted to conclude that the same Phoenician gods who were responsible for life on earth were also responsible for man's welfare in the Underworld, in the same way as Astarte cared for both the living and the dead under her Tanit form. This would explain why infernal gods and goddesses are difficult to identify in the Phoenician pantheon[4] and suggest that the Phoenicians perhaps conceived the Netherworld as a mere reflection of their own.

Finally, the iconography of the stelae allows an insight into aspects of Phoenician popular art and religious representations, which were largely unknown to this day. It stands in sharp contrast with the skilled and world famous artistic achievements of the Phoenicians known from royal monuments and luxury export items, in both the choice of the symbols and their execution. It nevertheless bears witness to the artistic means modest Tyrians and Sidonians could afford to express their religious views in order to enhance their chances with the gods and a resting place in the Underworld.

4. Baal Hamon is usually interpreted as a god of the Underworld because of his later identification with Roman Saturn (Theuer 2000: 315ff and Lipinski 1995: 260)

ADDENDUM

In October 2004, as the present volume was already in press, a new inscribed stele was discovered in the cemetery of Tyre el-Bass (Fig. 118a). To exclude it from this collection would have been really unfortunate and we therefore opted to offer a preliminary study of it in this addendum.

The stele was not found in its original position: it had fallen and was lying in a funerary context dating to the 8th c. B.C. It is a rectangular stone with a maximum height of 18,5 cm, a maximum width of 10,5 cm and a maximum thickness of 7,5 cm.

It clearly belongs to the category of "Common stelae" and it raises the number of the funerary monuments of this group to 53, that of the Tyrian stelae to 50, and, finally, that of the excavated stelae to 14. Like the other stelae of the same group, it was cut in sandstone and only the upper part of its front side was smoothed to receive the inscription. Its sides were also roughly hammered. Three incised lines can be seen on the stele's left side (Fig.1b). This feature finds a parallel in the tool traces left on the side of stele 46.

On its upper front side, four Phoenician letters were written in two lines: three on the first and one on the second line (Fig. 118c). They are of medium and almost equal size varying between 9 and 10 cm in height. The signs were deeply cut and it appears that their lines were filled in with a blue or dark-gray color. This feature is attested here for the first time in relation with alphabetic signs. On stele 32, traces of red paint were still preserved on the front side of the stone where only a symbol was represented. The use of paint on funerary stelae seems to have been more systematic than first assumed.

The letters read very clearly and beyond any doubt: *’grp. The* two lines of *aleph*'s head meet at a narrow angle to the left of the horizontal crossbar. The upper headline is not straight and curves down to the left. *Gimmel* has a long vertical shaft and a rather short stroke for the head, common to earlier forms of the sign, the one attested on stele 2, for example. *Resh* has also a very long vertical shaft and a relatively small triangular head. The most interesting sign is *pe*: it is elongated with a very short, almost horizontal headline, and a long vertical shaft the lower part of which gently curves to the left. It is very close to the form attested on stele 51. The palaeography of the inscription fits very well the 8th c. archaeological context.

As is the case with all inscribed stelae, these four signs represent undoubtedly the name of the deceased, a name, which, to my knowledge, is not attested in Phoenician and Punic onomastics. One possible explanation, although not entirely satisfactory, is to interpret it as a theophorous name built with an abbreviated form of the divine name *p‘m*, a god attested in Phoenician onomastics (Lipinski 1995: 215-218; see also stele 51). The term *’gr* is not known in Phoenician but a verbal root meaning "to rent" and a substantive meaning "wages", "salary" or "wall" (Hoftijzer 1965: 3-4) are attested in Empire Aramaic. The name could mean: "Salary (in the sense of retribution) of (the god) *p‘m*". Abbreviated names are widely attested in Phoenician onomastics, the shortened element being often the divine name as in *‘zm* for *‘zmlk* (Benz 1972: 235ff).

Finally, and since no verbal root *grp* or name *’grp* or *grp* are attested in Northwest Semitic, a non-Semitic origin of the personal name, the meaning of which remains unexplained, cannot be entirely excluded.

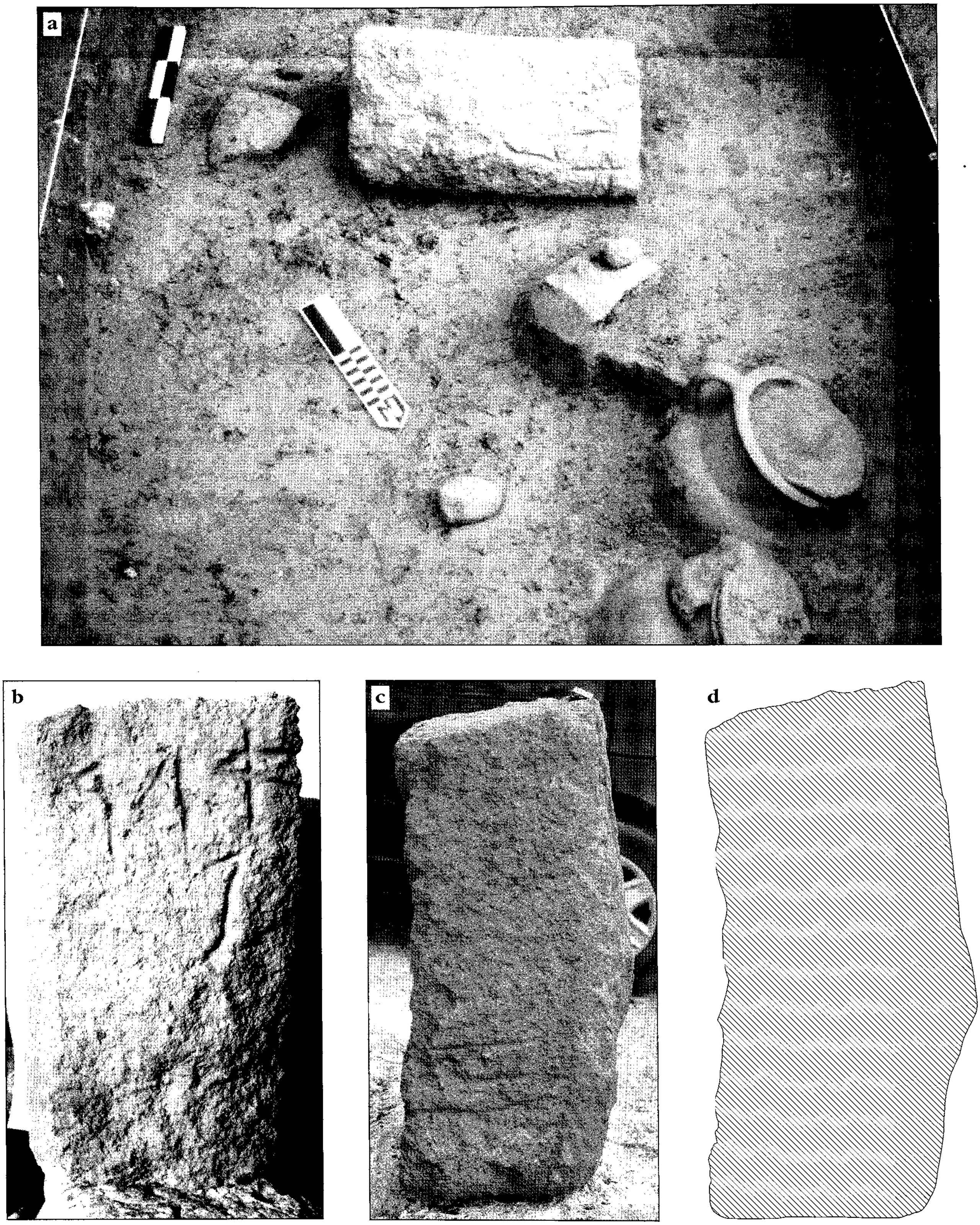


Fig. 118. Tyrian stele found in 2004.

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